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37.

75.









Edinburgh. Published by Oliver & Boyd.

POEMS
By
William Bowyer, Esq.



To draw th' incautious minnow from the brook.
or with ill fashion'd hook.
Retirement.

EDINBURGH,
Publish'd by Oliver & Boyd.



POEMS

BY

WILLIAM COWPER;

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED A

MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR

BY JOHN M'DIARMID.

FIFTH EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

—The mind that feels indeed the fire
The muse imparts, and can command the lyre,
Acts with a force, and kindles with a zeal,
Whate'er the theme, that others never feel.

TABLE TALK.

EDINBURGH:

OLIVER & BOYD, TWEEDDALE COURT; AND
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO., LONDON.

1837.

75.



[ENTERED IN STATIONERS' HALL.]

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ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

VARIOUS biographers of Cowper have appeared since the Author sketched the following Life, now nearly eighteen years ago. By some, indeed, the subject has been literally exhausted, and volumes were drawn from materials so scanty, that they border on the celebrated migrations from the "blue bed to the brown," which constitute the personal history of the recluse of Olney. In the opinion of the Public, or at least of the critics, this was the only error that Mr Hayley committed ; and in an age like the present, when the literature of the country is scooping for itself so many new and unwonted channels, and the cry is "economy of price as well as of time, the maximum of information in the minimum of space," it seems somewhat odd, that his example should have been followed rather than avoided. At the same time, it may be safely admitted, that brevity has its blemishes as well as bulkiness ; and on this principle, the first biographer of Cowper in the wake of Mr Hayley, in re-addressing himself

to an early study, has been induced to extend the original Memoir very nearly a half. Change generally leads to extension ; and as a man should learn something during eighteen years by research, reflection, and comparison of notes, he ventures to hope, that the Memoir now prefixed to the Poems of Cowper, with all its faults, will be found at least the most compact that has yet appeared.

DUMFRIES, *June* 1837.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

ABOUT two years ago the Publishers of the present volume, having resolved to print a new edition of COWPER'S WORKS, applied to me to furnish them with a short account of the Author's life. This task, after considerable hesitation, I agreed to execute. I was not only aware of my own unfitness for the undertaking, humble and commonplace as it is, but I had many doubts as to the propriety of engaging in any thing that might seem to interfere with the labours of Mr Hayley, to whom the public are under so many obligations. On the other hand, it occurred to me, that the bulkiness and expense of that gentleman's work rendered it in a great measure inaccessible to ordinary readers; and that, instead of a condensed and connected view of the life and character of the poet, it is chiefly filled with a large selection from his private correspondence, which the biographer has

merely bound together with a few detached paragraphs, to preserve the connexion of each series of letters, and render the subject of them intelligible. But, as the Edinburgh Reviewers justly remark, this plan of biography "requires so much room for its execution, and consequently so much money and so much leisure in those who wish to be masters of it, that it ought to be reserved for those great and eminent characters that are likely to excite an interest among all orders and generations of mankind. While the biography of Shakspeare and Bacon shrinks into the corner of an octavo, we cannot help wondering that the history of the sequestered life of Cowper should have extended into two quarto volumes."

In the whole range of English literature, there is perhaps not a single author who is more universally popular than Cowper. While the works of some of our greatest poets are left to slumber upon the shelves, *his* are perpetually upon the mantelpiece or the table; and although there may be some in the foremost rank of our immortals whose genius awakens a deeper sentiment of veneration, there is none whose writings come more directly home to the "business and bosoms" of all classes of our countrymen. Even in the religious world, where so few of the poets are admitted into the list of innocent or edifying authors, Cowper enjoys a high and unequalled popularity; and when the judicious mother or daughter thinks of adding to the library of a distant son or brother—of selecting a companion for her own morning walk

—or of affixing her name to a literary gift, which she wishes to be prized for its own sake as well as that of the giver, “The Task” is generally the first volume that presents itself to her thoughts. In fact, such is the fame of Cowper, that new editions of his works, in some shape or other, are almost constantly issuing from the press; and it has always struck me as singular, that not one of these editions that I have seen is accompanied by any thing like a memoir of the author. What common sense and custom have in all ages united, editors and publishers have, in this instance, contrived to divide; and, by an arrangement somewhat whimsical, the admirers of a poet, whose original productions can be comprized in one pocket volume, are referred, for the few particulars of his retired and solitary life, to a work extending to ten times the size. It is not my wish, however, to depreciate the editorial labours of Mr Hayley. All I contend for is, that the biography, like the poetry of Cowper, should be placed within the reach of *all*, either by prefixing it to the different editions of his poems, or by reducing it to a cheaper and more convenient form, as a separate work. Much, no doubt, might be said in praise of the poet’s epistolary style; but his letters, lively and unaffected as they are, would be much more prized were they reprinted upon a more rigid principle of selection, and without any view to that arrangement which seems to impose on us the necessity of perusing the whole series. When the history of a favourite author is presented to the reader in convenient dimensions,

he can lift the book at any leisure moment, and, in this way, soon becomes familiar with the subject ; but when the same matter, or at least the same facts, come before him in the formidable shape of two quarto volumes, he is extremely apt to delay, like Felix, the performance of a meditated duty till a more convenient season, and may die before he has carried his intention into effect.

To these observations I have only to add, that the Memoir prefixed to the present edition is totally different from that which appeared anonymously in the same work, more than twelve months ago. From the diminutive size in which the volume first appeared, and some other circumstances, I had been misled as to the class of readers into whose hands it was likely to fall ; and I was therefore not only careful to confine the narrative within moderate bounds, but also thought it expedient to suppress many general remarks that naturally arose on the subject, from an opinion that they might not be relished or appreciated. But the work having run rapidly to a second edition, I have been induced to revise and extend the only portion of it that can be termed original ; and, as the task confided to me implies nothing beyond industry, I believe I may take credit to myself for having brought within a very moderate compass the more important memorabilia of the life and writings of WILLIAM COWPER.

DUMFRIES, 1st September 1819.

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MEMOIR

OF

WILLIAM COWPER,

OF THE INNER TEMPLE, ESQ.

THAT the temperament of genius is akin to that of insanity, or, as Dryden more vividly expresses it, that

“Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide,”—

is an observation eminently calculated to check the enthusiasm of those who, in their passion for distinction, look with disdain upon the possessor of common qualities, and the happiness of a private station. The transition from the philosopher in his study, who, with Newton, expounds the laws of the universe, to the bedlamite, who has renewed his childhood and spends his hours in the employments of the nursery, is a spectacle so mortifying to the pride of intellect, and, like the doctrine of miracles, implies such a departure from the established order of the moral world, that were it not for the frequency of its occurrence, it would probably challenge an equal portion of unbelief. Yet the lives of literary men have too often confirmed the remark of the poet, and afforded at once a triumph to dulness, and a salutary caution to those who inherit the excitable constitution of genius. The most admirable mechanism is soonest liable to derangement, and the fancy that soars to the farthest verge of reason may easily penetrate the “thin partitions,” and plunge into the dreadful abyss beyond.

B

Never were these remarks more strikingly exemplified than in the experience of WILLIAM COWPER,—an author equally celebrated for the splendour of his talents and the piety and innocence of his life. Possessing a mind deeply imbued with knowledge, not unfortified by philosophy, and latterly the seat of the purest religion, he early fell a victim to that morbid sensibility which renders high intellect of small avail, and united in his own character qualities which by turns lead us to exult in the dignity and mourn over the weakness of human nature.

This interesting writer was born at Great Berkhamstead, in Hertfordshire, on the 26th of November (N. S.), 1731. His father, John Cowper, D. D., Rector of that parish and Chaplain to George the Second, was the second son of Spencer Cowper, a Judge in the Court of Common Pleas, and nephew of the Lord Chancellor of the same name. His mother, Anne, daughter of Roger Donne, Esq. of Ludham-hall, in the county of Norfolk, was allied to several noble houses, which in their turn traced their pedigree to Henry the Third, king of England; and in this way, we are told, “the highest blood in the realm flowed in the veins of the modest and unassuming Cowper.” It is fortunate, however, for posterity and his own fame, that he was destined to aspire to a more imperishable, as well as more exalting, species of distinction. The *celat* of tracing his immediate descent from two brothers who had both obtained seats in the House of Peers, might weigh with his contemporaries, but is quite lost upon posterity; and it is edifying to reflect that, so nobly has genius repaid its borrowed lustre, after a brief lapse of time, the name of Lord Chancellor Thurlow, beyond the pale of political history and legal knowledge, owed its chief distinction to William Cowper, his Lordship’s poetical and gifted friend. And in this undoubtedly the historian

did well ; for what are all the perishing honours which the breath of royalty can confer, compared to that divine afflatus—that undying halo, which, like the soul from which it emanates, is immortal and indestructible ? Where are now the long line of Babylonian princes, with their gorgeous palaces and cloud-capped towers ? What has become of the whole race of the Ptolemies ? Alas ! so little do we know of the once mighty Babel, that geometry itself is puzzled to detect with certainty the spot where it stood ; while even the pyramids of Egypt, those stupendous piles which appear to be as enduring as the everlasting hills, have been unable to transmit to posterity the names of the founders. But amidst the lapse of ages and the revolutions of empires, something is still preserved in the *Ark* of genius ; and such is the omnipotence of mind compared to matter, that even the little pencil of Apelles, the chisel of Phidias, the ballads of the mendicant Homer, and the improvising of the martyred Socrates, have been able to effect more than all the towers and temples of Tyre and Thebes, Palmyra and Babylon. The author of the “*Fairy Queen*” was similarly situated with regard to the Spencers ; and the historian Gibbon spoke well and wisely, when he admonished the members of that ancient family to prize the poem alluded to as by far the richest gem in their coronet.

Cowper’s mother, who died in 1737, at the early age of thirty-four, appears to have been a woman of great sweetness of temper, as well as considerable mental endowments. Of several children, the fruit of her union with Dr Cowper, two only survived their parents ; William, the subject of this memoir, and John, who afterwards became a clergyman, and a fellow of Bene’t (now Corpus Christi) College, Cambridge. But although this excellent and affectionate parent was torn from the future poet before he had completed his

sixth year, her virtues seem to have made an impression upon his mind, which neither time nor intercourse with the world could efface ; and the touching picture he has given of her maternal care and fondness, appears more like the vivid recollections of manhood, than the faint reminiscences of infancy. Excepting where the incidents have been of a striking or uncommon nature, there are few persons who can recall much of what passed within the walls of the nursery ; and perhaps, of those who love to entertain us with the history of such exploits, the greater part are more indebted to the loquacity of friends than their own unassisted recollection. But in the case of Cowper this remark will hardly apply. Having been early separated from his family, he afterwards had little opportunity of conversing with any one who can be supposed to have taken much interest in his juvenile history ; yet on receiving his mother's picture, after the long interval of fifty-two years, he gave vent to his feelings in a poem fraught with so much pathos and individuality of description, as to leave no doubt that he drew from his memory rather than his imagination. The image of one so dear seems to have been perpetually before him, and in a letter to Mr Hill we find the following passage :—" I can truly say, that not a week passes (perhaps I might with equal veracity say a day) in which I do not think of her : such was the impression her tenderness made upon me, though the opportunity she had for showing it was so short."

On the death of his mother, he was placed under the care of Dr Pitman, who then kept a considerable school at Market Street, in Hertfordshire, within a few miles of his father's residence.* But

* In Cowper's own Memoir, this village is stated to be in Bedfordshire, while Hayley places it in Hertfordshire. Both statements are correct, as the boundary-line between the two counties passes directly through it.

here he was like a tender greenhouse plant that has been suddenly transferred from a heated atmosphere to the chilling influence of the open air. Children not unfrequently display very great quickness in detecting any peculiarity of manner or disposition, whether in their equals or their seniors; and the excessive gentleness and sensibility of the poet's nature, instead of exciting, as in after-life, the sympathy of his companions, only exposed him to continual persecution. He complains of one boy in particular, who, at the age of fifteen, was a perfect adept in the art of tormenting, and who maliciously singled him out as an object on which to vent the cruelty of his disposition. But the barbarity of this little tyrant being at length discovered, he was expelled from the school, though not until his savage conduct had impressed on Cowper's mind such a dread of his figure, that he confesses he was "afraid to lift his eyes upon him higher than his knees, and knew him better by his shoe-buckles than by any other part of his dress." Those who ascribe to accidental circumstances and early impressions all the diversity that prevails in human character, might no doubt refer to this and similar incidents as sufficient to account for that habitual melancholy and depression of spirits which formed the bane of the poet's life; and it seems at least certain, that it was here he imbibed those prejudices which he has so eloquently recorded in his poem on public seminaries. He himself thinks that his first serious impression of religion occurred at this time; for it was while ruminating on past sufferings, and expecting every moment to be visited by his tormentor, that a text of Scripture ("I will not fear what flesh can do unto me") came into his mind, which "he applied to his own case with a degree of trust and confidence in God, that would have been no disgrace to a much more experienced Christian."

At the age of eight his friends became alarmed by the appearance of specks on his eyes ; and immediately placed him under the care of a female residing in London who had become celebrated as an oculist. But although the prescriptions of this person did not entirely remove his complaint, yet, at the end of two years, during which he remained under her care, his sight was so far restored that he was enabled to attend Westminster school, where, four years afterwards, he was attacked by the smallpox,—a distemper which had the singular effect of improving his sight, and, as he playfully remarks, “proved the better oculist of the two.” His eyes, however, still continued weak, and through life were subject to inflammation. Of the little stock of learning he carried with him to Westminster, or of his progress while there, we have a very imperfect account ; and in this instance one of his biographers seems to substitute an opinion for a fact, and tells us that he left that celebrated seminary at the age of eighteen, with classical attainments of the first order. His constitutional malady here began to develop itself in fits of despondency and lowness of spirits ; and he had frequent intimations of a consumptive habit. But this no one knew but himself ; for, with a feeling not unnatural in a boy, he regarded every kind of bodily ailment as a disgrace.

Having finished his academical studies, he returned to his father, and, after a vacation of about nine months, was sent to Mr Chapman, a respectable solicitor in London, for the purpose of acquiring the practice of the law. But this, as might be anticipated, was a pursuit very little suited to his disposition ; and, like the youths whom Pope satirizes, we may safely infer that he derived more pleasure from penning a sonnet than engrossing a law-paper. His master, being a man of no great application himself, and probably not overburdened with business, left his hopeful apprentice

pretty much to his own guidance, as sufficiently appears from the following quotation :—" I did," he says in a letter to his cousin, Lady Hesketh, " actually live three years with Mr Chapman, a solicitor ; that is to say, I slept three years in his house ; but I lived, that is to say, I spent my days, in Southampton-row, as you very well remember.* There was I, and the future Lord Chancellor,† constantly employed from morning to night in giggling, and making giggle, instead of studying the law."

It was at this time that he formed an attachment, which has been represented by several of his biographers as having exercised a melancholy influence over the whole of his after-life. The object of his affections was Theodora Jane, the beautiful and accomplished daughter of his uncle, Ashley Cowper, who, on the ostensible ground that marriage was improper between persons so nearly related, refused his consent to their union. Cowper, however, considered this objection of so little weight, that he still hoped it might be overcome ; but when he found the determination of her father unalterable, his intercourse with her ceased, and from that moment the lovers never again met.‡ The depth of his feelings may be gathered from the following beautiful lines, addressed to her sister, Lady Hesketh :—

" Doom'd, as I am, in solitude to waste
The present moments, and regret the past ;
Deprived of every joy I valued most,—
My friend torn from me, and my mistress lost,
Call not this gloom I wear, this anxious mien,
The dull effect of humour, or of spleen !
Still, still I mourn, with each returning day,
Him§ snatch'd by fate in early youth away ;

* His uncle resided in Southampton-row.

† Thurlow, who at that time was his fellow-clerk.

‡ The lady, whose affection neither time nor absence diminished, died unmarried in October 1824.

§ Sir William Russell, the poet's school-fellow at Westminster, and favourite friend, who was cut off by a premature death while bathing in the Thames.

And her—through tedious years of doubt and pain,
 Fix'd in her choice, and faithful—but in vain.
 O, prone to pity, generous, and sincere,
 Whose eye ne'er yet refused the wretch a tear ;
 Whose heart the real claim of friendship knows,
 Nor thinks a lover's are but fancied woes ;
 See me, e'er yet my distant course half done,
 Cast forth a wanderer on a wild unknown !
 See me neglected on the world's rude coast,
 Each dear companion of my voyage lost !
 Nor ask why clouds of sorrow shade my brow,
 And ready tears wait only leave to flow ;
 Why all that soothes a heart from anguish free,
 All that delights the happy, palls with me."

At the expiration of his nominal apprenticeship he took chambers in the Temple, where he resided nearly twelve years, although it does not appear that the air or retirement of the place had any effect in reconciling him to his professional studies. On the contrary, he makes the plainest confession of his negligence as to all such pursuits, in a letter written many years afterwards to his friend Mr Rose, who was then assiduously preparing himself for the duties of the Bar. "The colour of our whole life," he says very justly, "is generally such as the three or four first years, in which we are our own masters, make it. Then it is that we may be said to shape our own destiny, and to treasure up for ourselves a series of future successes or disappointments. Had I employed my time as wisely as you, in a situation very similar to yours, I had never been a poet perhaps, but I might by this time have acquired a character of more importance in society ; and a situation in which my friends would have been better pleased to see me. But three years misspent in an attorney's office, were almost of course followed by several more equally misspent in the Temple ; and the consequence has been, as the Italian epitaph says, '*Sto qui.*' (Here I am!) The only use I can make of myself now, at least the best, is to serve in *terrorem* to others, when occasion may happen to offer, that they may escape

(so far as my admonitions can have any weight with them) my folly and my fate.”* A man’s inclination, however, is in general no bad index to his talents, and on this principle it may be fairly doubted whether Cowper could have ever become eminent, even as a chamber-counsel. If his habitual diffidence was such as to disqualify him from reading a printed paper at the table of the House of Lords, how was he to acquire the art of extemporaneous eloquence, and conquer the numerous difficulties of a profession which of all others requires the most perfect ease and self-possession? At all events posterity will rejoice, that instead of shining on the bench or at the bar, and engaging in pursuits which might have diverted his talents from their natural channel, he spent his days in a sequestered village; and by digging in the most fertile of all mines, his own capacious genius, bequeathed to us a treasure which will endure as long as our language is spoken or written, and of which the whole human race may be denominated legatees.

If it can be said that Cowper ever lived like a man of the world, it was during his residence in the Temple; for, notwithstanding his natural shyness, he became acquainted with several distinguished literary characters, by whom he was highly esteemed for his powers of wit and pleasantry. Among these, particular mention is made of the Duncombes, Bonnel Thornton, Colman, and Lloyd. To aid the former he translated several odes of Horace, while he assisted the two latter by occasionally furnishing essays

* These reflections will remind many of a well-known passage in Burns’ “Vision.”

“Had I to gild advice but harkit,
I might by this hae led a market,
Or strutted in a bank, an’ clarkit
My cash-account;
While here half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,
Is a’ the amount.”

for their periodical named the *Connoisseur*. Three of these have been reprinted by Mr Hayley, and one of them in particular (a paper on Secrecy) seems worthy of being placed by the side of the happiest efforts of Addison and Mackenzie. Indeed its perusal will lead some readers to regret that the author did not oftener turn his attention to this delightful species of composition. Lloyd, the joint-editor of that publication, lived, as is well known, entirely by his literary labours, and it has been supposed that Cowper, who felt for his necessities, furnished him with many pieces both in prose and verse, which he never afterwards claimed. It is also pretty evident, that at this time he not only overrated his friend's talents, but was in a great measure a stranger to his own, otherwise we must consider the fact of his writing as the concealed assistant of Lloyd as a very singular instance of condescension. It must be admitted, however, that Cowper's productions, during the twelve years he resided in the Temple, were not voluminous; and if authorship be made the only test of industry, we must agree with those critics who have pronounced him a very idle student from the age of twenty-one to thirty-three. But on the other hand it may be said, that the art of composing well—an art which certainly does not come by instinct—requires of itself a very long apprenticeship, and it is probable that in forming his taste, Cowper, like every man of genius, in the course of his various studies, destroyed much of what he wrote; and that in this way his active and inquiring mind may have found sufficient employment in improving those powers which, at the age of fifty, burst forth like a new talent to delight and edify his countrymen.* One of the first poets of the present day, in a

* As a striking contrast to the excessive diffidence of Cowper's character, and the slow growth, or at least slow develop-

brief notice of Cowper, with which he has lately favoured the world, mentions, that although he lived in the very focus of convivial society while a student in the Temple, he never partook of its intemperance. This remark may be nearly correct, although there is

ment, of his talents, it may not be unuseful to introduce here an anecdote, which Sir Nathaniel Wraxall has preserved of his great contemporary William Pitt.

"It was in reply to Lord Nugent that Pitt first broke silence from under the gallery, on the opposition side of the House. The same composure, self-possession, and imposing dignity of manner, which afterwards so eminently characterized him when seated on the Treasury Bench, distinguished him in this first essay of his powers, though he then wanted three months to have completed his twenty-second year. The same nervous, correct, and polished diction, free from any inaccuracy of language, or embarrassment of deportment, which, as first minister, he subsequently displayed, were equally manifested on this occasion. Formed for a popular assembly, he seemed made to guide its deliberations, from the first moment that he addressed the members composing it. But a circumstance which will more forcibly exemplify this assertion than any description, I must not omit. Lord George Germain having occasion to make some verbal communication to Wellbore Ellis, who sat near him, they continued during a few moments to whisper each other, while Mr Pitt was speaking. Offended at such an apparent inattention on the part of two individuals so high in office, he suddenly suspended his discourse; and then, looking round upon the House, which was all ear, he said, with a manner and in a tone still more impressive than the reproof, 'I shall wait till the *Agamemnon* of the present day has finished his consultation with the *Nestor* of the Treasury Bench.' The observation which, independent of its classic beauty and its severity, arose from an accident impossible to have been foreseen, it was obvious could not be premeditated; and its effect, not only on the two persons to whom it was specially directed, but on the House at large, was electric. Lord George and Mr Ellis, in some confusion, instantly resumed their former attitudes, and Mr Pitt experienced no farther interruption. All men beheld in him at once a future minister; and the opposition, overjoyed at such an accession of strength, vied with each other in their encomiums, as well as in their predictions of his certain elevation. Burke exclaimed, that 'he was not merely a chip of the old block, but the old block itself.' Nor did Fox do less justice to the talents of this new competitor for power, popularity, and employment. But neither he nor Burke were probably aware of the profound and regulated, but soaring ambition, which animated him to aspire, without passing through any intermediate stage, to the first employments of the State. Still less could they apprehend, or foresee, that he would form, during the greater part of their future lives, the principal and insurmountable bar to their own attainment or permanent enjoyment of office."

some difficulty in reconciling it with several passages in the poet's own memoirs, where he confesses that "he spent about twelve years in the Temple, in an uninterrupted course of sinful indulgence; and was frequently employed, when half intoxicated, in vindicating the truth of Scripture in the very act of rebelling against its dictates." But the deep and settled melancholy to which he was subject, led him, on other occasions, to magnify the most venial offences into crimes of the deepest dye; and probably Mr Campbell has acted wisely in giving the most charitable interpretation to his autobiography. His dejection, in truth, was frequently such, that he describes himself at this time as lying down in horror and rising up in despair. While these fits of gloom lasted, the elegant pursuits of literature were entirely neglected; but he seems to have derived pleasure from a volume of religious poetry by Herbert, although he was soon after advised by a dear friend to lay this book aside, as having a greater tendency to nourish than remove his disorder. It was while recovering from one of these fits of dejection that he paid a visit to Southampton, an event which, although trifling in itself, gave rise to feelings and impressions that are worthy of attention in estimating his future life and character.—These emotions are well described in the following vivid passage :—

"I embraced an opportunity of going with some friends to Southampton, where I spent several months. Soon after our arrival we walked to a place called Freemantle, about a mile from the town. The morning was clear and calm, the sun shone bright upon the sea, and the country on the border of it was the most beautiful I had ever seen. We sat down upon an eminence at the end of that arm of the sea which runs between Southampton and the New Forest. Here it was that, on a sudden, as if another sun had been kindled

that instant in the heavens, on purpose to dispel sorrow and vexation of spirit, I felt the weight of all my misery taken off; my heart became light and joyful in a moment. I could have wept with transport had I been alone. I must needs believe, that nothing less than the Almighty fiat could have filled me with such inexpressible delight; not by a gradual dawning of peace, but as it were with a flash of his life-giving countenance. I think I remember something like a glow of gratitude to the Father of Mercies for this unexpected blessing, and that I ascribed it to his gracious acceptance of my prayers."

This incident made such a strong impression on his imagination, that it frequently embittered his existence, and during all his future illnesses was ever uppermost in his thoughts. Most persons subject to alienation of mind have some particular crotchet, or, as Sterne touchingly expresses it, "some string upon which hang all their griefs;" and so it fared with the amiable and excellent Cowper. The feelings so unexpectedly roused at Southampton he fancied to be nothing less than the workings of the Divine Spirit; yet, as he soon after burnt his prayer-books, and relapsed into his former indifference to religious duties, remorse in its turn took possession of his mind, until at last the illusion became so complete, that he firmly believed he had committed the unpardonable sin. About this time he lost his father,—an event which made a deep impression on his tender heart, and, for a season at least, gave a fiercer energy to his constitutional disease.

A great part of his patrimony being now spent, poverty, almost the only evil with which he had not hitherto grappled, appeared sufficiently near to give him many anxious and uneasy thoughts as to his future means of subsistence. He had never applied to the study of law with the diligence of a man whose

spaining as to the issue. The feelings of a man when he arrives at the place of execution, are probably much as mine were every time I set my foot in the office, which was every day for more than half a year together."

At length the vacation occurring, he obtained a respite from these embarrassing and painful labours, and repaired to Margate with all the joy and alacrity of a man who had been immured in a dungeon for twenty years. Here the change from an atmosphere contaminated with smoke and dust to green fields and refreshing breezes, added to the influence of gay society, speedily beguiled his cares, and, like a true poet, while gathering wild-flowers in the neighbourhood in the midst of a group of fair companions, every one of whom might be in his estimation "herself a fairer flower," he sometimes forgot that there were such things in the world as a House of Peers, voluminous journals, and a public examination. For some time, however, his despondency returned during the night, and in the morning he frequently looked forward to the approaching winter, and "regretted the flight of every moment which brought it nearer, like a man borne away by a rapid torrent into a stormy sea, whence he sees no possibility of returning, and where he knows he cannot subsist." But in a little time even these visitations gave way to happier thoughts; the charm of female society, under its most engaging form, which through life never failed to sooth and bless him, was a luxury now happily within his reach; and possessing so many opiates both for the body and the mind, he at length, as he confesses, acquired such a facility in turning away his thoughts from the approaching crisis, that for weeks together he hardly ever adverted to it.

In the beginning of October 1763 he was recalled to London to attend the office, and prepare for the final trial, an event which renewed and increased his

unconquerable diffidence. Although unwilling to renounce his appointment, and thus bring his friend's discretion into question, he felt convinced that by keeping possession of it he would expose himself to public censure for inability; and he even seems to have had a fixed presentiment, that whatever knowledge he had acquired by consulting the journals would all forsake him when called to the bar of the House. This, to those who are blessed with nerves of iron and sinews of steel, will no doubt appear surprising; and were we not aware that *hypochondriasis* is the most capricious of all complaints, we should be apt to lose in some degree that feeling of reverence which the perusal of "The Task" never fails to inspire for the character of its author. What, it might be asked, are the House of Peers, that the immediate descendant of Judge Cowper, himself a man of genius and an accomplished scholar, should have been afraid to read before them? Had they been an assembly of demi-gods who wielded the thunderbolts of Jove, in place of frail and mortal men, he could not have dreaded more the idea of being dragged into their presence. True genius generally is, and should be, conscious of its own dignity. The pomp and circumstance of the court and the senate—the mace and the sceptre—the counsellor's robe and the judge's ermine, may excite, like the ritual of the Roman church, a salutary awe in the minds of the vulgar; but in the estimation of a man of sense, these trappings are only venerable in so far as they are the types of things of greater value. His discerning eye easily penetrates beyond the thin veil which custom has spread over the surface of things, and he has a standard in his own mind by which he estimates and compares the powers and capacities of his fellow-men. To him justice is as sacred and imposing when seated under the chestnut-tree that witnessed the ratification of William's Penn's treaty

with the North American Indians, as under a canopy of velvet. But to return from this digression—

In proportion as the day of trial drew near, the misery of Cowper increased, and his agony at last rose to such an astonishing height that it unsettled his mind and reconciled him to the dreadful purpose of self-murder. It is impossible to peruse the narrative written by himself, wherein he most feelingly and penitentially describes his sensations at this period—his wavering and mistaken notions of Christianity—and the determination with which he pursued his purpose, without feeling the deepest sympathy for the unfortunate sufferer. The intelligent reader will recollect the case of Budgell, one of the writers in the *Spectator*, who threw himself into the Thames, and defended his resolution by saying, *what Cato did, and Addison approved, could not be wrong*. The following quotations will show that about this time Cowper had given way to similar sentiments:—"I well recollect that when I was about eleven years of age, my father desired me to read a vindication of self-murder, and give him my sentiments upon the question. I did so, and argued against it. My father heard my reasons and was silent, neither approving nor disapproving, from whence I inferred that he sided with the author against me."—And again: "At this time I fell into company, at a chop-house, with an elderly well-looking gentleman, whom I had often seen there before, but had never spoken to. He began the discourse, and talked much of the miseries he had suffered. At length self-murder became the topic; and in the result we agreed, that the only reason why some men were content to drag on their sorrows with them to the grave, and others were not, was, that the latter were endued with a certain indignant fortitude of spirit, teaching them to despise life, which the former wanted. Another person, whom I met at a tavern, told me that he had made up his mind about

that matter, and had no doubt of his liberty to die as he saw convenient ; though by the way the same person, who has suffered many and great afflictions since, is still alive. This concurrence of sentiment in men of sense, unknown to each other, I considered as a satisfactory decision of the question, and determined to proceed accordingly.

“ One evening in the month of November 1763, as soon as it was dark, affecting as cheerful and unconcerned an air as possible, I went into an apothecary's shop, and asked for a half-ounce phial of laudanum. The man seemed to observe me narrowly ; but if he did, I managed my voice and countenance so as to deceive him. The day that required my attendance at the bar of the House being not yet come, and about a week distant, I kept my bottle close in my side-pocket, resolved to use it when I should be convinced there was no other way of escaping. The day before the period above mentioned arrived, being at Richard's Coffee-house at breakfast, I read the newspaper, and in it a letter, which the farther I perused it, the more closely it engaged my attention. I cannot now recollect the purport of it ; but before I had finished it, it appeared demonstratively true to me that it was a libel or satire upon me. The author appeared to be acquainted with my purpose of self-destruction, and to have written that letter on purpose to secure and hasten the execution of it. My mind probably at this time began to be disordered. However it was, I was certainly given up to a strong delusion. I said within myself, ‘ Your cruelty shall be gratified—you shall have your revenge ;’ and, flinging down the paper in a fit of strong passion, I rushed hastily out of the room, directing my steps towards the fields, where I intended to find some house to die in ; or, if not, determined to poison myself in a ditch, when I should meet with one sufficiently retired.”

Impressed with these dreadful ideas, before Cowper had long walked in the fields, a thought suddenly struck him that he might yet spare his life—sell all he had in the funds—and embark for France, where, if he found it difficult to earn a subsistence amidst the bustle of the world, he promised himself a peaceful retreat within the walls of a monastery. Gratified by this expedient, he returned to his chambers; but while adjusting his portmanteau for the journey, his decision again forsook him, and a second time he resolved to carry into execution his dreadful purpose of self-destruction.

Being exposed to continual interruption from his laundress and her husband, he abandoned his design of taking poison, and resolved upon drowning. He hired a coach, and ordered the postilion to drive to the Tower Wharf, where he intended to throw himself into the river from the Customhouse Quay; but on arriving at what he considered the fatal spot, he found the tide had retired, and perceived a porter, whose observation he could not escape, seated on some goods. He again entered the coach, and would have immediately swallowed the laudanum which he carried with him, but his agitation was so excessive that he could not raise the phial to his lips.

On his return to the Temple he shut himself up in his own room, and again prepared for the work of death, by placing the laudanum in a small basin at his bedside, and lying down half undressed. After much hesitation, and many misgivings of mind, he was in the act of seizing the cup, when he felt that he had lost the power of his hands, a privation which appeared to him so like Divine interposition, that it staggered his resolution. Before he had recovered from his surprise, his laundress's husband entered the room; upon which, dreading a discovery, he started out of bed, concealed the bowl under the clothes, and,

assuming a composed air, retired to another apartment. Here he became sensible of the crime he had attempted to commit, and still meditated ; and, in a moment of indignation, poured away the drug, and threw the phial out of the window. But this was only a transitory impulse ; and the whispers of conscience and reason were immediately stifled amidst the workings of the fell despair which now took possession of his enfeebled and disordered intellects. In the evening an intimate friend paid him a visit, and congratulated him on the resolution he understood he had formed of repairing to the House, and boldly maintaining his office to the last. This impression Cowper did not remove, but said within himself, " I shall see him no more."

At three o'clock next morning, he awoke from sleep ; and having, by the help of a rushlight, found his penknife, he placed it under his left breast, and leant his weight several times upon it ; but as the point was broken, it did not penetrate. At seven it occurred to him that no time was to be lost ; for as the hour of opening the chambers was at hand, his friend would soon be at his bedside impatient to hurry him away to Westminster. But the sequel to this most distressing portion of his personal history must be given in his own graphic words : " I arose, and, as I thought, bolted the inner door of my chambers, but was mistaken : my touch deceived me, and I left it as I found it. My preservation indeed, as it will appear, did not depend upon that incident ; but I mention it to show that the good providence of God watched over me to keep open every way of deliverance, that nothing might be left to hazard. Not one hesitating thought now remained, but I fell greedily to the execution of my purpose. My garter was made of a broad scarlet binding, with a sliding buckle, being sewed together at the end : by the help of the buckle I made a noose, and fixed it about my neck,

straining it so tight, that I hardly left a passage for my breath, or for the blood to circulate; the tongue of the buckle held it fast. At each corner of the bed was placed a wreath of carved work, fastened by an iron pin, which passed up through the midst of it; the other part of the garter, which made a loop, I slipped over one of these, and hung by it some seconds, drawing up my feet under me, that they might not touch the floor; but the iron bent, and the carved work slipped off, and the garter with it. I then fastened it to the frame of the tester, winding it round, and tying it in a strong knot. The frame broke short, and let me down again. The third effort was more likely to succeed. I set the door open, which reached within a foot of the ceiling, and by the help of a chair I could command the top of it; and the loop being large enough to admit a large angle of the door, was easily fixed, so as not to slip off again. I pushed away the chair with my feet, and hung at my whole length. While I hung there, I distinctly heard a voice say three times, ' 'Tis over!' Though I am sure of the fact, and was so at the time, yet it did not at all alarm me, or affect my resolution. I hung so long that I lost all sense, all consciousness of existence. When I came to myself again, I thought myself in hell; the sound of my own dreadful groans was all that I heard; and a feeling like that produced by a flash of lightning, just beginning to seize upon me, passed over my whole body. In a few seconds I found myself fallen with my face to the floor. In about half a minute I recovered my feet, and, reeling and staggering, stumbled into bed again. The stagnation of the blood under one eye, in a broad crimson spot, and a red circle about my neck, showed plainly that I had been on the brink of eternity. The latter, indeed, might have been occasioned by the pressure of the garter, but the former was

certainly the effect of strangulation ; for it was not attended with the sensation of a bruise, as it must have been, had I, in my fall, received one in so tender a part."

He had not lain long, when his laundress, who heard him fall while lighting a fire in an adjoining room, entered his chamber, and said she feared he had been seized with a fit. He instantly despatched her for a friend, to whom he disclosed the whole affair, and afterwards made the same communication to his kinsman. The latter, on seeing the broken garter, exclaimed, " My dear Mr Cowper, to be sure you cannot hold the office at this rate. Where is the deputation ?" On receiving the document, his business called him immediately away ; and thus the affair ended, and with it all the poet's expectations of obtaining a lucrative appointment.

But the resignation of an office which had awakened such dreadful apprehensions brought no peace to his mind. On the contrary, his malady increased every day ; and when his brother arrived, who had been called to his assistance, the invalid exhibited all the symptoms of confirmed madness. In walking along the street, it was a prevailing fancy, that every one he met instantly turned round to stare and laugh at him ; and as long as this fit prevailed, he took good care, while dining at his tavern, to sit in the darkest corner of the room, imagining, as he says, " that the voice of conscience was loud enough for every one to hear it." He no longer, it is true, dwelt upon the painful circumstance that had been the origin of his present misery, but he gave himself up to a train of ideas still more gloomy and alarming. Although he had failed in his attempts at self-destruction, he believed his guilt to have been the same as if he had actually succeeded ; and, recurring to the feelings he experienced at Southampton, he again declared, that he had com-

mitted the unpardonable sin, which completely excluded every hope of mercy. His brother, although unceasing in his attempts to reason him out of this delusion, found all his efforts unavailing, and willingly allowed him to send for his religious friend Martin Madan, whom he formerly thought an enthusiast, but from whose conversation he now derived a slight degree of consolation.

Cowper's friends, on finding his disorder had taken this melancholy turn, determined to place him under the care of Dr Cotton, who had opened a house at St Albans for the reception of a limited number of such patients, and whose qualities as a man and a Christian, not less than his skill as a physician, peculiarly fitted him for the task he had undertaken. It is proper, as our author himself remarks, to draw a veil over the secrets of this his prison-house; but we may briefly mention that his disorder, the prime feature of which was religious despair, began, at the end of the seventh month, to yield to time and the kind attentions of his physician.* Of these attentions he was himself so sensible, and derived so much comfort from the friendship and conversation of Dr Cotton, that he remained

* The crisis of his recovery seems also to have been hastened by the conversation and endearing attentions of his brother, who revisited him about this time. "As soon as we were left alone (he says), my brother asked me how I found myself. I answered, 'As much better as despair can make me.' We went together into the garden. Here, on expressing a settled assurance of sudden judgment, he protested to me that it was all a delusion, and protested so strongly, that I could not help giving some attention to him. I burst into tears, and cried out, 'If it be a delusion, then am I the happiest of beings!' Something like a ray of hope was shot into my heart, but still I was afraid to indulge it. We dined together, and I spent the afternoon in a more cheerful manner. * * * I went to bed and slept well. In the morning I dreamed, that the sweetest boy I ever saw came dancing up to my bedside; he seemed just out of leading-strings, yet I took particular notice of the firmness and steadiness of his tread. The sight affected me with pleasure, and served at least to harmonize my spirits; so that I awoke for the first time with a sensation of delight on my mind."—*Memoir published in 1816.*

in his house very nearly twelve months after his cure had been completed. At the end of that time, the necessity of living in a manner more suited to his limited means forced him to look out for a new residence; and, with a view to be near his brother, he expressed an anxious wish to settle in the immediate neighbourhood of Cambridge. Convinced of his utter incapacity for business, he determined to renounce London for ever; and that no temptation might remain to interfere with this resolution, he resigned an office which he had held for some time as Commissioner of Bankrupts, the profits of which amounted to about £60 a-year. By this step he reduced his already scanty income so much, that even with the strictest economy it could not have sufficed for his maintenance; but his friends subscribed amongst themselves such a sum annually as enabled him to enjoy such comforts, as from his recent illness, had become more necessary than ever. No suitable abode having been found for him in the vicinity of Cambridge, his brother, although equally anxious with himself that their intercourse should be frequent and regular, hired lodgings for him at Huntingdon, distant about sixteen miles. To this place he immediately removed, attended by his relation and a man-servant, who had waited upon him while at St Albans, and who in a few months had become so much attached to him, that he requested to be continued in his service upon any terms. This person is described as the very mirror of fidelity and affection, and the remark is at least generally true, that good masters make good servants. The Turkish spy kept none because he dreaded the possible presence of an enemy; but Cowper continued his, because he required and valued the attentions of a steady friend.

During the few days his brother remained with him at Huntingdon, the time seems to have passed hap-

pily enough ; but no sooner was he gone than the spirits of the poet began to sink from the want of society and the absence of amusements adapted to his situation. He does not appear to have carried to his new residence any letters of introduction ; and although some of his neighbours waited on him of their own accord, their visit led to no permanent intimacy. Walking, however, which he practised both for health and amusement, relieved in some measure the tedium of his solitary parlour ; and if his religious feelings still bordered on enthusiasm, they were happily unmingled with any portion of that remorse and despair which had formerly made such dreadful inroads on his frame. He was now quite regular in his attendance at church, and he appears to have been equally pleased with the earnestness of the officiating clergyman, and the devout deportment of the congregation.

From the print which Hayley has given of Cowper in his edition of his Letters, we can easily believe that there was something extremely interesting in his personal appearance ; and although at this period his features had become calm and composed, it is probable that to a discerning eye they still retained traces of the tremendous billows of affliction which had so lately passed over him. But however this may be, it is certain that to his appearance alone he was indebted for one of the warmest and happiest friendships he ever formed. In a little country-town the history and character of every new-comer are sure to be sifted with the most eager curiosity ; and accordingly it soon became known that Cowper rather shunned than courted society. But notwithstanding of this, William Cawthorne Unwin, the son of the clergyman, felt such an interest in the stranger, merely from his appearance, that he accosted him one morning after coming out of church, and in a very particular manner requested the pleasure of his acquaintance. The

invalid, though extremely shy, was neither repulsive nor rude; and in the course of a short walk this amiable youth gained so much upon him by his frank and ingenuous manners, that he received an invitation to drink tea with him the same evening. This soon led to a farther intimacy, and Mr Unwin, not a little proud of the conquest he had made, took the first opportunity of presenting the poet to his truly Christian parents, by whom he was received with that home-welcome which is the best antidote to shyness. The conversation and manners of Mrs Unwin in particular attracted his observation so strongly, that the great happiness he enjoyed in her society forms the unceasing theme of his letters written about this period.

It may not perhaps be improper to furnish the reader with a faint outline of the history of a family which figures so conspicuously in the life and letters of Cowper. The elder Mr Unwin, who was now advanced in years, had in the earlier part of his life been lecturer to the two churches in Huntingdon; but was afterwards promoted by his college to the living of Grimstone. On obtaining this preferment, he married Miss Cawthorne (Mrs Unwin), daughter of a draper in Ely, a lady to whom he had been long attached; but Mrs Unwin, who was much younger than her husband, disliking both the situation and the society of Grimstone, prevailed on him, shortly after their union, to return to Huntingdon, where he was known and respected. Their household consisted of a son and a daughter, the former in his twenty-first and the latter in her eighteenth year; besides a few domestic pupils, whose studies Mr Unwin was in the habit of directing. The discovery of a gold mine could not have delighted the hypochondriac half so much as his connexion with this family, and in the course of a long series of letters, he has given us various

hints respecting their characters. The father he describes as a man of learning and good sense, and as simple as Parson Adams; the mother as a lady who had read much to excellent purpose,—who, possessing an uncommon understanding, was more polite than a duchess, and whose conversation had often done him more good than he could have received from an audience of the first prince in Europe. The daughter, who was rather handsome and genteel, resembled her mother in her great piety; and her brother is described as a youth who, having nothing in his heart that made it necessary for him “to keep it barred and bolted, opened it to the perusal even of a stranger.”* Betwixt these different persons there subsisted the most perfect harmony. The son was designed for the church, not as a profession merely, but from principle and choice; and the daughter, we believe, at the age of eighteen, was betrothed to the gentleman whom she afterwards married.† To close this digression, it may be stated that one of Mr Unwin’s boarders having been sent to the university, Cowper was soon after allowed, at his own request, to occupy the vacant place; and from that moment he was scarcely ever separated for a day or an hour from the society of Mrs Unwin.

It has been remarked, that the life which the poet led in this devout and favourite circle, was more like that of a “Penitentiary friar than a Protestant lay-

* When the poet used this expression, he probably recollected the saying of Iago, so often quoted,—

“I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
For daws to peck at.”—*Othello*.

† This gentleman, to whom Miss Unwin was united in 1774, was the Rev. Matthew Powley, M. A. afterwards vicar of Dewsbury. He was born in September 1740, in the small village of Whale, parish of Lowther; was educated at the free school of Appleby; became eminent for piety and learning; and died in December 1806, in his 67th year. His widow survived him nearly twenty-nine years, having expired in November 1835, aged eighty-nine.

man." With the single exception of more extended walks, their course of life appears, from the following passage, to have been exactly such as we may suppose obtains in a modern monastery. "We breakfast (he says) commonly between eight and nine; till eleven we read either the Scripture, or the sermons of some faithful preacher of these holy mysteries; at eleven we attend divine service, which is performed here twice every day; and from twelve to three we separate and amuse ourselves as we please. During that interval, I either read in my own apartment, or walk, or ride, or work in the garden. We seldom sit an hour after dinner, but if the weather permits, adjourn to the garden, where, with Mrs Unwin and her son, I have generally the pleasure of religious conversation till tea-time. If it rain, or is too windy for walking, we either converse within doors, or sing some hymns of Martin's collection, and, by the help of Mrs Unwin's harpsichord, make up a tolerable concert, in which our hearts, I hope, are the best and most musical performers. After tea, we sally forth to walk in good earnest. Mrs Unwin is a good walker, and we have generally travelled about four miles before we see home again. When the days are short, we make this excursion in the former part of the day, between church-time and dinner. At night we read and converse as before till supper, and commonly finish the evening either with hymns or a sermon; and, last of all, the family are called to prayers."*

* From the following passage it would appear that Cowper, about this period, had been advised to take orders: "I have had many anxious thoughts about taking orders, and I believe every new convert is apt to think himself called upon for that purpose; but it has pleased God, by means which there is no need to particularize, to give me full satisfaction as to the propriety of declining it. Indeed, they who have the least idea of what I have suffered from the dread of public exhibitions, will readily excuse my never attempting them hereafter. In the mean time, if it please the Almighty, I may be an instrument of turning many to the truth in a private way, and hope that my

In the month of July 1767, being about two years from the time Cowper first settled at Huntingdon, the Rev. Mr Unwin was unfortunately thrown from his horse, while riding to church on a Sunday morning, and received a fracture on his skull, which occasioned his death on the Thursday following. An occurrence of this nature was calculated to make a deep impression on the mind of the poet. The moment he was made aware of the accident, he repaired to the cottage to which Mr Unwin was carried, and has described in very feeling terms both his sufferings as a man and his fortitude as a Christian.* Shortly

endeavours in this way have not been entirely unsuccessful. Had I the zeal of Moses, I should want an Aaron to be my spokesman."

* For the following important note I am indebted to Mr Carruthers of the Inverness Courier, who resided several years in Huntingdon, wrote a history of the place, and in the course of his researches obtained ready access to the Corporation Records:—

"The house in Huntingdon in which Cowper and his friends resided communicates through the garden with a public walk, shaded from a common by a row of fine lime-trees; and here the amiable recluse was frequently seen pacing in solitary but cheerful meditation. This retreat is still occasionally named *Cowper's Walk*. The poet had just recovered from that awful calamity which for a time overwhelmed his reason; and his gratitude for this delivery, joined to the kind parental solicitude of the Unwins, seems to have expanded his native tenderness of heart, and disposed him to look on all around him with unalloyed satisfaction and delight. In his letters written from Huntingdon, we find the utmost playfulness of fancy, sprightliness, and good humour. 'I am much happier than the day is long,' he writes, 'and sunshine and candlelight alike see me perfectly contented.' He talks with rapture of his early rising and morning rambles, his walks to a spring in the vicinity of the town, and to the beautiful little churchyard of Hartford, situated on the banks of the Ouse.—It appears from the Corporation Books of Huntingdon, that Mr Unwin, the poet's friend, was appointed, in 1734, lecturer to a charity held in trust by the Mercers' Company in London. He was also some time master of the grammar school of Huntingdon—the school in which Oliver Cromwell was educated—which office he resigned in 1761. In 1767, a fall from his horse at Godmanchester terminated the existence of this gentleman, whose humble grave in St Mary's churchyard, Huntingdon, is marked by a flat unornamented stone, inscribed simply—'Morley Unwin, B. D., died July 2, 1767, aged 63.' It is not a little singular, as militating

after this event, Mrs Unwin, to whom Huntingdon had now lost all its charms, expressed an anxious wish to change her place of residence; and as her conduct to her friend and boarder had always been that of a mother to a son, he determined to follow her whithersoever she should go. Some time elapsed, however, before they were able to fix upon a new abode; and in making choice at last of the village, or rather the town of Olney, they seem to have been chiefly guided by the Rev. John Newton, a gentleman well known in the religious world. To this place they accordingly removed on the 14th October 1767.*

Here Cowper continued in the same sequestered habits of life, endearing himself to all around by numerous acts of beneficence and charity, which he was enabled to perform through the bounty of the late John Thornton, Esq. an unassuming philanthropist, whom

against our conception of Mr Unwin's character, that the Huntingdon Corporation Books contain resolutions expressive of severe censure upon the reverend gentleman for neglect of his duty as lecturer. On one occasion, the Corporation resolved to dismiss him from the charge, worth about £60 per annum, unless he became more regular in the discharge of his duty. Mr Unwin, however, retained the situation long afterwards; and it is probable, that another pastoral charge which he held, the rectory of Graffham in the same county, interfered, at the period in question, with his lectureship at Huntingdon. Morley Unwin, like Crabbe, the poet, and almost every other pluralist, must have felt that the binding influence of a settled and permanent minister cannot be withdrawn for any length of time with impunity."

* Some time subsequent to this, Cowper addressed a letter to his cousin, Mrs Cowper, to which he appended the following remarkable note:—"N. B. I am not married."—"This," says a recent writer, "was intended to contradict a rumour which was circulated, that the poet had married Mrs Unwin; and as she was not more than ten years older than himself, nothing but their exemplary characters prevented the connexion from being received with suspicion." All his biographers have attributed their attachment to friendship, excepting one, who states that Cowper intended to marry her; that the recurrence of his malady alone prevented it; and that he repeatedly declared, that if he ever entered a church again, it would be for the purpose of making her his wife.—Memoir of Cowper by the Rev. S. Greathead, prefixed to an edition of his poems, 16mo, 1818.

he has justly celebrated in his poems. Here also, the society and example of Mr Newton, whose pastoral labours, in a certain sense, he may be said to have shared, contributed to fix his thoughts more and more on the awful contemplation of futurity; and, in conjunction with this gentleman, he wrote a variety of spiritual songs, known by the name of the "Olney Hymns," which were intended to perpetuate the remembrance of their friendship. "Cowper," says his reverend coadjutor, "particularly loved the poor. He often visited them in their cottages, conversed with them in the most condescending manner, sympathized with them, counselled and comforted them in their distresses; and those who were seriously disposed were often cheered and animated by his prayers." But the mind of the poet was composed of materials too delicate to support so great an excess of pious exercises. In January 1773, his hypochondriacal malady returned with all its former violence, and nearly six years elapsed before reason resumed her sway. During this season of affliction, the friendship of Mrs Unwin was put to the severest test; and the tenderness and assiduity with which she watched over the interesting sufferer, were such as a mother only, or one gifted with a mother's solicitude, could bestow. So sensible was he of this, that on being restored to health, it formed the chief business of his life to repay the kindness he had received, by the utmost attention to the health and comfort of his aged companion.

About three years from the time he settled at Olney, his brother John was seized with a dangerous distemper, of which he subsequently died on the 20th March 1770, aged thirty-three. An event of this nature could not fail to make a deep impression on the sensitive mind of the poet; and it is probable that the pain he suffered on the occasion, added to the self-denied

tenor of his life, laid the foundation of that long and painful illness which again eclipsed his admirable faculties. From the moment he arrived at Cambridge, he appears to have been apprehensive that death was in the cup, and while the physician exhausted all the resources of the healing art, in attempting to subdue the malady of his patient, the amiable poet applied himself with equal assiduity to effect that change in his religious sentiments, which he believed to be essential to his eternal welfare. In this attempt he at last succeeded; and in relating the circumstance to his cousin, Mrs Cowper, who had heard that his brother's death had been predicted by a female fortune-teller, he says, "I suppose there may be some truth in the matter; but whatever he might think of it before his knowledge of the truth, and however extraordinary her predictions might really be, I am satisfied that he had then received far other views of the wisdom and majesty of God, than to suppose that he would intrust his secret counsels to a vagrant, who did not mean, I suppose, to be understood to have received her intelligence from the Fountain of Light, but thought herself sufficiently honoured by any who would give her credit for a secret intercourse of this kind with the Prince of Darkness."* John Cowper was a man much esteemed for his amiable manners and extensive ac-

* The fortune-teller seems to have been an old soldier, and not a female, as Cowper supposed. His predictions were, "that John Cowper would remain only a short time at the school in which he then studied, but would be sent to a larger one; that he would go to the university, and, before he left it, would form an attachment strong enough to give him much disappointment, as it would not be mutual; that he would not marry *before* he was thirty, but that *after* that age his fate became obscure, and the lines of his hand showed no more prognostics of futurity." These prognostications appear to have made a deep impression on the mind of Cowper's brother; and as circumstances occurred which gave to them a colouring of truth, his last illness, which occurred after he had passed his thirtieth year, was viewed by him as the consummation of the predictions which had been uttered in his boyhood.—Southey's Works of Cowper (8vo, London, 1836-7), vol. vii. pp. 259, 260.

quirements as a linguist, as may be gathered from an affecting tribute which is paid to his memory in the second book of "The Task."

————— I had a brother once:
Peace to the memory of a man of worth!
A man of letters, and of manners too!
Of manners sweet as Virtue always wears,
When gay Good-humour dresses her in smiles.
He graced a college, in which order yet
Was sacred; and was honour'd, loved, and wept,
By more than one, themselves conspicuous there.

During the first period of William's second illness, his religious despondency was too deep and settled to admit of any alleviation; but afterwards he was so far enabled to struggle with it as to find amusement in the taming of three hares, the gift of kind neighbours, who had heard him express a wish to rear a single leveret. To gather day by day the food, and observe the different gambols of these quadrupeds, although rather a boyish employment, was one well suited to the feeble health of the poet; and that uniform kindness which can tame the most savage animal, soon gained him the confidence of the most timid. The merit of teaching pointers to set has been long ascribed to an English poet, and we believe Cowper was the first man who thought it worth while to study the dispositions of hares. But neither the character of bipeds nor quadrupeds could long escape his keen observation; and there is scarcely any subject, however unpromising, to which his lively pen could not impart an interest. The account which he published in the Gentleman's Magazine of this curious family has been universally read and admired; and were hares long-lived animals, and had his happened to survive their master, we believe they would have been worth more money at the present day, than even the most valuable of those which candidates for parliamentary honours distribute so liberally on the eve of an election. Two of these hares died of mere

old age ; and in a nice wooden box, which their keeper constructed with his own hands, dozed out life very comfortably, far from all the evils of gun and greyhound, poacher, or more gentlemanlike sportsman. He also kept canaries and pigeons, and a beautiful spaniel, called Beau, which attended him on all occasions. Of this little animal he has recorded a very pleasant anecdote. One summer evening, while wandering on the banks of the Ouse, enjoying the beauties of the scene and the season, or, perhaps, conning a favourite author, he observed a water-lily floating in the stream, which, with the help of his staff, he in vain endeavoured to bring to the shore. At last, not choosing to encounter the risk of damp feet or more serious immersion, he abandoned the pursuit ; upon which his dog, who had all along eagerly watched his movements, plunged into the river, seized the lily very gently with his teeth, and returning to the shore, immediately laid it at his master's feet. Beau was of course much caressed for the service he had performed ; and were the power of making knights vested in poets, and the honour applicable to the canine race, there can be no doubt that he would have been honourably distinguished among the dogs of his time. As it was, the whole affair ended in a song—the bank-paper of poets, but which unfortunately has never been declared a legal tender.

In 1778, he re-directed his attention to literary pursuits, and again engaged in a correspondence with several of his friends. His first letters were addressed to the Reverend William Unwin, who had now obtained orders, and was actively engaged in the duties of his profession. Many of these epistles, particularly those dated in 1780, are enlivened by a constant flow of sprightliness and good-humour, as may be inferred from the following playful specimen :—“ Alas ! what can I do with my wit ? I have not enough to do

great things with ; and these little things are so fugitive, that, while a man catches at the subject, he is only filling his hand with smoke. I must do with it as I do with my linnet : I keep him for the most part in a cage, but now and then set open the door, that he may whisk about the room a little, and then shut him up again. My whisking wit has produced the following, the subject of which is more important than the manner in which I have treated it seems to imply ; but a fable may speak truth, and all truth is sterling." To this letter was annexed the beautiful fable of the Nightingale and the Glow-worm. He also corresponded frequently with the Reverend John Newton, whose fame as a divine had reached London, and who in consequence had been called to the charge of a very respectable congregation in that city. It was through the advice of this gentleman, as the reader has already seen, that Mrs Unwin was induced to settle at Olney ; and certainly his presence and kind attention must have been a great comfort to her during the long and painful illness of their mutual friend. Many months of the most melancholy portion of that illness were passed under his roof ; and Cowper, whose gratitude never slumbered, did not soon forget the obligation. When he afterwards commenced his literary career, Mr Newton was not only invited to criticise his writings freely, but requested to compose a preface, and stand as it were godfather to the firstborn of his literary children.*

We next find him engaged in landscape-drawing, an employment of which he soon became passionately fond, and in which, considering his opportunities and application, he appears to have made to-

* This preface was suppressed by the publisher, on the ground that it was of too sombre a cast. It was, however, bound up with several copies of the first edition, and has been inserted in all those published since 1790.—Southey's Works of Cowper, vol. iii. p. 2, note.

lerable progress. Men of genius are sometimes accused of affecting an indifference to those studies in which their talent lies, and exposing themselves to ridicule by pretending to arts of which they know nothing. But there was a truth and modesty in our author's nature, that never suffered him to give way to any of these weaknesses. "Amusements," he observes, writing to the Rev. William Unwin, "are necessary in retirement like mine, especially in such a sable state of mind as I labour under. The necessity of amusement makes me sometimes write verses,—it made me a carpenter, a bird-cage maker, a gardener,—and has lately taught me to draw, and to draw too, with such surprising proficiency in the art, considering my total ignorance of it two months ago, that when I show your mother my productions; she is all admiration and applause.

* * * I draw mountains, valleys, woods, and streams, and ducks and dab-chicks. I admire them myself, and Mrs Unwin admires them; and her praise and my praise put together are fame enough for me. O! I could spend whole days and moonlight nights in feeding upon a lovely prospect." And again, in renewing his correspondence with his cousin, Mrs Cowper, "You see me sixteen years older, at the least, than when I saw you last; but the effects of time seem to have taken place rather on the outside of my head than within it. What was brown is become grey, but what was foolish remains foolish still. Green fruit must rot before it ripens, if the season is such as to afford it nothing but cold winds and dark clouds that interrupt every ray of sunshine. My days steal away silently, and march on (as poor mad Lear would have made his soldiers march) as if they were shod with felt; not so silently but that I hear them; yet were it not that I am always listening to their flight, having no infirmity that I had not when I was much younger, I should deceive myself with an imagination that I am still young."

by a personal visit, produced an intimacy so warm and cordial as to justify a sentiment of regret that the recluse of Weston did not sooner meet with a friend whose feelings and pursuits were so completely in unison with his own. During this visit Mrs Unwin had a paralytic stroke, which at once deprived her of the power of speech and the use of one of her arms ; and for a while threatened to be attended with consequences equally disastrous to the mind of her companion. In this emergency, the friendship of Mr Hayley was put to a severe test ; and although his efforts did much to dissipate the cloud that seemed ready to settle on the intellect of the poet, the anxiety and apprehension with which the latter watched over the health of the lady retarded his literary labours, and rendered the rest of his life a constant struggle with that insidious malady of which he was the destined victim.

In August 1792 he visited Eartham, the residence of his new acquaintance, a compliment of which that gentleman might well be proud, as a proof of great regard in a person who had not slept under the roof of a stranger for more than twenty years. In this excursion he was accompanied by Mrs Unwin ; and it is impossible to convey to the reader a stronger idea of the anxiety with which he had watched her recovery than by quoting an expression that occurs in a letter written a few days before he left home. " I have literally," he says, " done nothing since I saw you. Nothing, I mean, in the writing way, though a great deal in another ; that is to say, in attending my poor Mary, and endeavouring to nurse her up for a journey to Eartham. In this I have hitherto succeeded tolerably well ; and would rather carry this point completely than be the most famous editor of Milton that the world has ever seen, or shall see."

After a month's absence from home, during which Mr Hayley spared no exertion to restore his guests to

health and cheerfulness, they returned to Weston. The poet, however, did not resume his Miltonic labours, which had never been a favourite occupation with him. Writing to Mr Hayley in December 1792, he says, "How often do I wish in the course of the day that I could be employed once more in poetry, and how often, of course, that this Miltonic trap had never caught me!" The habit of study had by this time entirely forsaken him; and, with the exception of a letter which he now and then wrote before breakfast, he spent the day "in forecasting the fashion of uncertain evils."^{*}

From this period till November 1793, when he received a second visit from Mr Hayley, his labours seem to have been confined to a few occasional amendments on his Homer, of which he meditated a new and improved edition. He still, Mr H. tells us, possessed completely all the admirable faculties of his mind, and all the native tenderness of his heart; but there was something, he adds, indescribable in his appearance, which led him to apprehend that, without some signal event in his favour to re-animate his spirits, they would gradually sink into hopeless dejection. The state of his aged and infirm companion afforded additional ground for increasing solicitude. Her cheerful and beneficent spirit could hardly resist her own accumulated maladies, so far as to preserve ability sufficient to watch over the tender health of him whom she had watched and guarded so long.

His melancholy at this time was no doubt greatly increased by the gloomy nature of his prospects. Mrs Unwin's income, which hitherto had rather exceeded

^{*} From what follows it appears that Cowper sat to the late Sir Thomas Lawrence. Writing to Mr Hayley in October 1793, he says, "On Tuesday we expect company—Mr Rose and Lawrence the painter. Yet once more is my patience to be exercised, and once more I am made to wish that my face had been moveable, to put on and take off at pleasure, so as to be portable in a bandbox, and sent to the artist."

his own, was now diminished from some cause which is not explained; and as the parties had no separate interest, this circumstance may be supposed to have affected him in much the same manner as a personal loss. But what afflicted him beyond every other misfortune was the bodily sufferings of his aged friend, whose infirmities were such, that it formed the chief business of his life to repay those attentions to which, under Providence, he believed he was indebted for the recovery and preservation both of his health and his reason. But to a mind so sensitive, and a frame so shattered, what employment can be conceived more unsuitable than that of nursing, with all the anxiety of a parent, a woman already sunk into a state of second childhood? Yet this was the daily, nay the hourly, occupation of the great author of "The Task;" and when we combine with the pain, or rather the agony, he must have suffered from this cause, his apprehensions of future poverty, and despair of ever resuming his pen, at least for any profitable purpose, it will hardly be hyperbolical to say he suffered the extreme of human misery.

It was at this critical period in his history, that the kind and amiable Lady Hesketh flew to his relief; and cheerfully took upon herself the management of the household of those who were no longer equal to the task themselves. But all the resources of her fertile mind, although they might relieve in some faint degree, were unable to remove the deep and settled melancholy that now overshadowed the poet's spirit. For more than a twelvemonth this heroic lady continued to struggle against the stream; and, among her many compassionate acts, it was certainly not the least to have relinquished all the pleasures of fashionable life for the mournful task of comforting night and day two invalids, one of whom had been reduced to a state of dotage from age and bodily infirmity,

while the other laboured under the still more afflicting disease of mental alienation. Sometimes, for a fortnight together, Cowper refused to taste any other food than a little bread dipped in water or wine ; and even the great Dr Willis' art, which had ministered to the mind of royalty, was altogether lost upon him. His distress, in fact, was such, that when his friends received the welcome intelligence that the government, in consideration of his genius and the services he had rendered to the cause of morality, had been pleased to settle upon him an annual pension of £300, their joy was immediately damped by the reflection that the communication could not impart even a ray of pleasure to him for whose ear it was chiefly intended.

Although Milton was a sincere Christian, he was not perhaps, strictly speaking, a religious poet ; but if ever a man deserved this character—a character that never has been common in the world—it was the author of “The Task.” With him the desire of doing good predominated over every other feeling ; and the hope of emolument—nay, even the love of fame itself, was still kept subordinate to this great object. It was most befitting, therefore, to bestow some public reward upon a man who had done more to check the progress of immorality than a hundred acts of Parliament ; and were every sinecure created for the same good purpose, there is scarcely a reformist, however violent and unreasonable, that would quarrel with its appropriation. But it is the misfortune of genius that its reward generally comes too late—when its ear is deaf to the voice of fame, and when poverty can no longer embitter the existence which it contributed to shorten. Had the same pension been granted to Cowper when he was in the full possession of his admirable faculties—before he had wasted his hours in the drudgery of translation—it seems probable that some second work

would have emanated from his pen, replete with those beauties that grow brighter with years, and are more prized as the world increases in knowledge and virtue.

It was chiefly through Lord Spencer's interest and kind recommendation that the attention of the king was drawn to the merits of Cowper. The Lord Chancellor Thurlow, from whom he had long expected some favour, with the exception of a few hypercritical remarks on a passage in his translation, never appears to have given him any decided proof of his friendship. This is the more surprising, considering that they had been fellow-students, and had met almost every day at the house of Cowper's aunt in London. On one of these occasions the poet, or rather the prophet, addressed his friend to this effect :—"Thurlow, I am nobody, and shall be always nobody, and you will be chancellor. You shall provide for me when you are." He smiled and replied, "I surely will."—"These ladies," said Cowper, "are witnesses." He still smiled, and said, "Let them be so, for I will certainly do it." This promise, however, was forgotten; and we find the poet, who had too much modesty, as well as too much independence of character, to remind him of it, telling Lady Hesketh, "As to myself, I have long since ceased to have any expectations from that quarter. Yet if he were indeed mortified, as you say, and repented of his hasty exertions in favour of the present occupant, who can tell? He wants neither means nor management, but can easily at some future period redress the evil, if he chooses to do it. But in the mean time life steals away, and shortly neither he will be in circumstances to do me a kindness, nor I to receive one at his hands. Let him make haste, therefore, or he will die a promise in my debt which he will never be able to perform." Thurlow, though he neglected the strong and pious claims of Cowper, exerted himself to sooth the

declining age of Johnson. He was also kind to Crabbe, having at one time presented him with a bank-note for a hundred pounds, and afterwards assisted him to valuable church-preferment. Johnson, however, was in high fame as a powerful political partisan, and Crabbe was unnoticed by the chancellor till he became the *protégé* of Burke. Thurlow seems to have been essentially a man of a cold and selfish disposition, with haughty repulsive manners.

In her self-imposed task of nursing the two invalids, Lady Hesketh was frequently assisted by the Rev. Dr John Johnson, Rector of Yaxham with Welborne, in Norfolk, who, being distantly related to the poet, had frequently visited him during the terms of college, and appears to have enjoyed a large share of his confidence and affection. To this gentleman it forcibly occurred one day, that a summer's residence by the seaside might be productive of much benefit to the health of his revered kinsman; and Lady Hesketh agreeing in this opinion, preparations were made for conducting the two sick persons by easy journeys into Norfolk, where they were comfortably lodged in a parsonage-house, and attended by Miss Johnson and another female relation of the rector's, who was destined to close the poet's eyes. On the first day of their progress, the party rested at the village of Eaton, near St Neots; and in the evening Cowper, who seemed to enjoy the peaceful moonlight scenery, walked with his kinsman in the village churchyard, conversing with great composure on the subject of Thomson's Seasons, and the probable circumstances under which they were written.

In thus migrating to a more genial climate, it had never entered into the thoughts of his friends, that his absence would extend beyond a few months; but it was otherwise with Cowper himself, who seems to have had a presentiment that he should never return

to his beloved retreat at Weston. Immediately before his departure for the sea-coast, he wrote in pencil on the window-shutter of his bedroom, the following lines :—

“ Farewell dear scenes, for ever closed to me:
Oh, for what sorrows must I now exchange ye!”*

Mr Hayley is of opinion, that he about this time composed his celebrated poem to Mary (Mrs Unwin); which, although dictated by an affection purely platonic, has never been surpassed in point of tenderness and pathos by any similar production in our language. Petrarch and Shenstone, who are so much celebrated for the tenderness and beauty of their effusions, are supposed to have spoken the language of nature; and if Cowper had been under the influence of similar feelings, we know not, from the following specimen, to what height he might have carried the excellence of amatory poetry. The quotation is long, but excellence never requires any apology.

TO MARY.

THE twentieth year is well nigh past
Since first our sky was overcast;
Ah! would that this might be the last!
My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
I see thee daily weaker grow;
’Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore,
Now rust disused, and shine no more,
My Mary!

* These lines remained unerasd for upwards of forty years, and in 1833 were copied by a gentleman residing in the neighbourhood of Weston, who forwarded them to Dr Southey.—Works of Cowper, vol. III. p. 177, note.

For though thou gladly would'st fulfil
 The same kind office for me still,
 Thy sight now seconds not thy will,
My Mary!

But well thou play'st the housewife's part,
 And all thy threads, with magic art,
 Have wound themselves about this heart,
My Mary!

Thy indistinct expressions seem
 Like language utter'd in a dream;
 Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
My Mary!

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
 Are still more lovely in my sight
 Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!

For could I view nor them nor thee,
 What sight worth seeing could I see?
 The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,
 Thy hands their little force resign;
 Yet gently prest, press gently mine,
My Mary!

Such feebleness of limbs thou prov'st,
 That now, at every step thou mov'st,
 Upheld by two, yet still thou lov'st,
My Mary!

And still to love, though prest with ill,
 In wintry age to feel no chill,
 With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!

But, ah! by constant heed I know
 How oft the sadness that I show
 Transforms thy smiles to looks of wo,
My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast
 With much resemblance of the past,
 Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary!

The kinsman of Cowper left no means untried,
 which appeared calculated to divert his melancholy,
 and restore his former serenity of mind. With this
 view, change of air and of scenery was frequently

tried ; but no relief from the incessant pressure of his melancholy could be obtained.

When the winter approached, and rendered walking inconvenient or impracticable, Cowper listened with peculiar pleasure to the works of fiction which Mr Johnson read to him from time to time, until he had exhausted an immense store ; yet the listener never displayed any mark of weariness, but, on the contrary, discovered peculiar satisfaction when a volume of more than ordinary extent was introduced. Sunday, at this time, was the day that hung most heavily on his hands ; and when Mr Johnson was absent in the discharge of his clerical duties, he used to evince his anxiety for his return by watching at the hall-door and listening to the farm-dogs, which, in the stillness of the night, were heard at a considerable distance, and invariably announced the approach of his companion. But the utmost efforts of this good man could only enable him to compose a few detached pieces ; and “ The Castaway,” the last original poem which he penned, in some respects may be regarded as faithfully descriptive of his own disordered and painful feelings.

THE CASTAWAY.

OBSCUREST night involved the sky ;
The Atlantic billows roar'd ;
When such a destined wretch as I,
Wash'd headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast
With warmer wishes sent.
He loved them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
Expert to swim, he lay ;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
Or courage die away ;
But waged with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted : nor his friends had fail'd
 To check the vessel's course,
 But so the furious blast prevail'd
 That, pitiless per force,
 They left their outcast mate behind,
 And scudded still before the wind.

Some succour yet they could afford ;
 And, such as storms allow,
 The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
 Delay'd not to bestow ;
 But he, they knew, nor ship, nor shore,
 Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

Nor, cruel as it seem'd, could he
 Their haste himself condemn,
 Aware that flight, in such a sea,
 Alone could rescue them ;
 Yet bitter felt it still to die
 Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives who lives an hour
 In ocean, self-upheld :
 And so long he, with unspent power,
 His destiny repell'd ;
 And ever, as the minutes flew,
 Entreated help, or cried—" Adieu !"

At length, his transient respite past,
 His comrades, who before
 Had heard his voice in every blast,
 Could catch the sound no more ;
 For then, by toil subdued, he drank
 The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him : but the page
 Of narrative sincere,
 That tells his name, his worth, his age,
 Is wet with Anson's tear ;
 And tears by bards or heroes shed,
 Alike immortalize the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
 Descanting on his fate,
 To give the melancholy theme
 A more enduring date.
 But misery still delights to trace
 Its semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allay'd,
 No light propitious shone ;
 When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
 We perish'd, each alone ;
 But I beneath a rougher sea,
 And whelm'd in deeper gulfs than he.

The following affecting lines, addressed to the clergyman of Weston, will evince with what fondness he clung to that favourite village, and the tender recollections which it afterwards excited :—

“ I will forget for a moment, that to whomsoever I may address myself, a letter from me can no otherwise be welcome than as a curiosity. To you, sir, I address this, urged to it by extreme penury of employment, and the desire I feel to learn something of what is doing, and has been done, at Weston (my beloved Weston!) since I left it.—No situation, at least when the weather is clear and bright, can be pleasanter, which you will easily credit, when I add, that it imparts something a little resembling pleasure, even to me. Gratify me with news of Weston! If Mr Gresson and your neighbours the Courtenays are there, mention me to them in such terms as you see good. Tell me if my poor birds are living! I never see the herbs I used to give them without a recollection of them, and sometimes am ready to gather them, forgetting that I am not at home. Pardon this intrusion. Mrs Unwin continues much as usual.”

In the summer of 1798, some faint dawnings of convalescence having appeared, he resumed his revision of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. In December Mrs Unwin died; and we may judge of the ravages which dejection had been making on his truly noble mind, by the fact that he seemed but little affected by that event. On being brought to view the corpse, he started away with a broken exclamation of sorrow, and never afterwards mentioned her name.

In the same month the family removed to a more commodious house than they had hitherto occupied, at East Dereham. Here the invalid had not passed many weeks, when all hopes of his recovery were suddenly frustrated, by his ailment assuming a dropsical appearance in his ankles and feet. On the 22d of Fe-

bruary 1800 his weakness had increased to such a degree, that he could no longer endure the motion of a carriage, and it does not appear that he ever afterwards left his apartments. At five in the morning of April 25, he became insensible, and about twelve hours afterwards expired without a struggle. He was buried in that part of the church of East Dereham called St Edmund's Chapel; and over his grave a monument was erected by Lady Hesketh,* bearing the following inscription from the pen of his friend Mr Hayley :—

IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

Born in Hertfordshire 1731.—Buried in this Church 1800.

Ye, who with warmth the public triumph feel
Of talents, dignified by sacred zeal,
Here, to devotion's bard devoutly just,
Pay your fond tribute due to Cowper's dust!
England, exulting in his spotless fame,
Ranks with her dearest sons his fav'rite name.
Sense, fancy, wit, suffice not all to raise
So clear a title to affection's praise :
His highest honours to the heart belong ;
His virtues form'd the magic of his song.

Mr Hayley describes Cowper's personal appearance ; and as the true character of his mind is drawn by a still abler writer, it may be useful to append both passages.

“ From his figure, as it first appeared to me in his sixty-second year, I should imagine that he must have been very comely in his youth ; and little had time injured his countenance, since his features expressed at that period of life all the powers of his mind, and all the sensibility of his heart. He was of a middle stature, rather strong than delicate in the form of his limbs : the colour of his hair was a light brown,

* This amiable lady died in 1808, at the age of seventy-four.

that of his eyes a bluish gray, and his complexion ruddy. In his dress he was neat, but not finical ; in his diet temperate, and not dainty. He had an air of pensive reserve in his deportment, and his extreme shyness sometimes produced in his manners an indescribable mixture of awkwardness and dignity ; but no being could be more truly graceful when he was in perfect health and perfectly pleased with his society. Towards women in particular, his behaviour and conversation were delicate and fascinating in the highest degree."

" The personal character of Cowper (says Jeffrey) is easily estimated, from the writings he has left, and the anecdotes contained in this publication. He seems to have been chiefly remarkable for a certain feminine gentleness and delicacy of character, that shrunk back from all that was boisterous, presumptuous, or rude. His secluded life, and awful impressions of religion, concurred in fixing upon his manners something of a saintly purity and decorum, and in cherishing that pensive and contemplative turn of mind by which he was so much distinguished. His temper appears to have been yielding and benevolent ; and though sufficiently steady and confident in the opinions he had adopted, he was very little inclined, in general, to force them upon the conviction of others. The warmth of his religious zeal made an occasional exception : but the habitual temper of his mind was toleration and indulgence ; and it would be difficult, perhaps, to name a satirical and popular author so entirely free from jealousy and fastidiousness, or so much disposed to show the most liberal and impartial favour to the merit of others in literature, in politics, and in the virtues and accomplishments of social life. No angry or uneasy passions, indeed, seem at any time to have found a place in his bosom ; and, being incapable of malevolence himself, he probably passed through life

without having once excited that feeling in the breast of another.

“ The great merit of this writer appears to us to consist in the boldness and originality of his composition, and in the fortunate audacity with which he has carried the dominion of poetry into regions that had been considered as inaccessible to her ambition. The gradual refinement of taste had for nearly a century been weakening the fire of original genius. Our poets had become timid and fastidious, and circumscribed themselves both in the choice and the management of their subjects, by the observance of a limited number of models, who were thought to have exhausted all the legitimate resources of the art. Cowper was one of the first who crossed this enchanted circle, who regained the natural liberty of invention, and walked abroad in the open field of observation as freely as those by whom it was originally trodden ; he passed from the imitation of poets to the imitation of nature, and ventured boldly upon the representation of objects that had not been sanctified by the description of any of his predecessors. In the ordinary occupations and duties of domestic life and the consequences of modern manners, in the common scenery of a rustic situation and the contemplation of our public institutions, he has found a multitude of subjects for ridicule and reflection, for pathetic and picturesque description, for moral declamation and devotional rapture, that would have been looked upon with disdain, or with despair, by most of our poetical adventurers. He took as wide a range in language, too, as in matter ; and, shaking off the tawdry incumbrance of that poetical diction which had nearly reduced the art to the skilful collocation of a set of appropriated phrases, he made no scruple to set down in verse every expression that would have been admitted

in prose, and to take advantage of all the varieties with which our language could supply him.

“ With not a few defects, Cowper will probably very long retain his popularity with the readers of English poetry. The great variety and truth of his descriptions ; the minute and correct painting of those home scenes and private feelings with which every one is internally familiar ; the sterling weight and sense of most of his observations, and, above all, the great appearance of facility with which every thing is executed, and the happy use he has so often made of the most common and ordinary language ; all concur to stamp upon his poems the character of original genius, and remind us of the merits that have secured immortality to Shakspeare.”

POEMS.

TABLE TALK.

*Si te forte meæ gravis uret sarcina chartæ,
Abjicito.* Hor. Lib. 1. Epist. 13.

A. You told me, I remember, glory, built
On selfish principles, is shame and guilt ;
The deeds, that men admire as half-divine,
Stark naught, because corrupt in their design.
Strange doctrine this ! that without scruple tears
The laurel, that the very lightning spares ;
Brings down the warrior's trophy to the dust,
And eats into his bloody sword like rust.

B. I grant that, men continuing what they are,
Fierce, avaricious, proud, there must be war :
And never meant the rule should be applied
To him that fights with justice on his side.

Let laurels, drenched in pure Parnassian dews,
Reward his mem'ry, dear to ev'ry muse,
Who, with a courage of unshaken root,
In honour's field advancing his firm foot,
Plants it upon the line that Justice draws,
And will prevail or perish in her cause.
'Tis to the virtues of such men, man owes
His portion in the good that Heav'n bestows.
And when recording History displays
Feats of renown, though wrought in ancient days ;
Tells of a few stout hearts, that fought and died,
Where duty plac'd them, at their country's side ;
The man, that is not mov'd with what he reads,
That takes not fire at their heroic deeds,
Unworthy of the blessings of the brave,
Is base in kind, and born to be a slave.

But let eternal infamy pursue
The wretch, to nought but his ambition true ;

Who, for the sake of filling with one blast
 The post-horns of all Europe, lays her waste.
 Think yourself station'd on a tow'ring rock,
 To see a people scatter'd like a flock,
 Some royal mastiff panting at their heels,
 With all the savage thirst a tiger feels ;
 Then view him self-proclaim'd in a gazette,
 Chief monster that has plagu'd the nations yet.
 The globe and sceptre in such hands misplac'd,
 Those ensigns of dominion, how disgrac'd !
 The glass, that bids man mark the fleeting hour,
 And Death's own scythe would better speak his pow'r ;
 Then grace the bony phantom in their stead,
 With the king's shoulder-knot and gay cockade ;
 Clothe the twin brethren in each other's dress,
 The same their occupation and success.

A. 'Tis your belief the world was made for man ;
 Kings do but reason on the self-same plan :
 Maintaining yours, you cannot theirs condemn,
 Who think, or seem to think, man made for them.

B. Seldom, alas ! the pow'r of logic reigns
 With much sufficiency in royal brains ;
 Such reas'ning falls like an inverted cone,
 Wanting its proper base to stand upon.
 Man made for kings ! those optics are but dim,
 That tell you so—say, rather, they for him.
 That were indeed a king-ennobling thought,
 Could they, or would they, reason as they ought.
 The diadem, with mighty projects lin'd,
 To catch renown by ruining mankind,
 Is worth, with all its gold and glitt'ring store,
 Just what the toy will sell for, and no more.

Oh ! bright occasions of dispensing good,
 How seldom us'd, how little understood !
 To pour in Virtue's lap her just reward ;
 Keep Vice restrain'd behind a double guard ;
 To quell the faction, that affronts the throne,
 By silent magnanimity alone ;
 To nurse with tender care the thriving arts,
 Watch ev'ry beam Philosophy imparts ;

To give Religion her unbridled scope,
 Nor judge by statute a believer's hope ;
 With close fidelity and love unfeign'd,
 To keep the matrimonial bond unstain'd ;
 Covetous only of a virtuous praise ;
 His life a lesson to the land he sways ;
 To touch the sword with conscientious awe,
 Nor draw it but when duty bids him draw ;
 To sheath it in the peace-restoring close,
 With joy beyond what victory bestows ;—
 Blest country, where these kingly glories shine !
 Blest England, if this happiness be thine !

A. Guard what you say ; the patriotic tribe
 Will sneer and charge you with a bribe.—*B.* A bribe !
 The worth of his three kingdoms I defy,
 To lure me to the baseness of a lie :
 And, of all lies (be that one poet's boast),
 The lie that flatters I abhor the most.
 Those arts be theirs, who hate his gentle reign ;
 But he that loves him has no need to feign.

A. Your smooth eulogium to one crown address'd,
 Seems to imply a censure on the rest.

B. Quevedo, as he tells his sober tale,
 Ask'd, when in hell, to see the royal jail ;
 Approv'd their method in all other things ;
 But where, good sir, do you confine your kings ?
 There—said his guide—the group is full in view.
 Indeed !—replied the don—there are but few.
 His black interpreter the charge disdain'd—
 Few, fellow ?—there are all that ever reign'd.
 Wit, undistinguishing, is apt to strike
 The guilty and not guilty both alike.

I grant the sarcasm is too severe,
 And we can readily refute it here ;
 While Alfred's name, the father of his age,
 And the Sixth Edward's grace th' historic page.

A. Kings then, at last, have but the lot of all :
 By their own conduct they must stand or fall.

B. True. While they live, the courtly laureate pays
 His quit-rent ode, his peppercorn of praise ;

And many a dunce, whose fingers itch to write,
 Adds, as he can, his tributary mite.
 A subject's faults a subject may proclaim,
 A monarch's errors are forbidden game !
 Thus, free from censure, overaw'd by fear,
 And prais'd for virtues, that they scorn to wear,
 The fleeting forms of majesty engage
 Respect, while stalking o'er life's narrow stage ;
 Then leave their crimes for history to scan,
 And ask, with busy scorn, Was this the man ?

I pity kings, whom Worship waits upon
 Obsequious from the cradle to the throne ;
 Before whose infant eyes the flatt'rer bows,
 And binds a wreath about their baby brows ;
 Whom Education stiffens into state,
 And Death awakens from that dream too late.
 Oh ! if Servility, with supple knees,
 Whose trade it is to smile, to crouch, to please ;
 If smooth Dissimulation, skill'd to grace
 A devil's purpose with an angel's face ;
 If smiling peeresses, and simp'ring peers,
 Encompassing his throne a few short years ;
 If the gilt carriage and the pamper'd steed,
 That wants no driving, and disdains the lead ;
 If guards, mechanically form'd in ranks,
 Playing, at beat of drum, their martial pranks,
 Should'ring, and standing as if struck to stone,
 While condescending majesty looks on !—
 If monarchy consist in such base things,
 Sighing, I say again, I pity kings !

To be suspected, thwarted, and withstood,
 Ev'n when he labours for his country's good ;
 To see a band, call'd patriot for no cause,
 But that they catch at popular applause,
 Careless of all th' anxiety he feels,
 Hook disappointment on the public wheels ;
 With all their flippant fluency of tongue,
 Most confident, when palpably most wrong ;
 If this be kingly, then farewell for me
 All kingship ; and may I be poor and free !

To be the Table Talk of clubs up-stairs,
 To which th' unwash'd artificer repairs,
 T' indulge his genius after long fatigue,
 By diving into cabinet intrigue
 (For what kings deem a toil, as well they may,
 To him is relaxation and mere play) ;
 To win no praise when well-wrought plans prevail,
 But to be rudely censur'd when they fail ;
 To doubt the love his fav'rites may pretend,
 And in reality to find no friend ;
 If he indulge a cultivated taste,
 His galleries with the works of art well grac'd,
 To hear it call'd extravagance and waste ;
 If these attendants, and if such as these,
 Must follow royalty, then welcome ease ;
 However humble and confin'd the sphere,
 Happy the state, that has not these to fear.

A. Thus men, whose thoughts contemplative have
 dwelt

On situations that they never felt,
 Start up sagacious, covered with the dust
 Of dreaming study and pedantic rust,
 And prate and preach about what others prove,
 As if the world and they were hand and glove.
 Leave kingly backs to cope with kingly cares ;
 They have their weight to carry, subjects theirs ;
 Poets, of all men, ever least regret
 Increasing taxes and the nation's debt.
 Could you contrive the payment, and rehearse
 The mighty plan, oracular, in verse,
 No bard, howe'er majestic, old or new,
 Should claim my fix'd attention more than you.

B. Not Brindley nor Bridgewater would essay
 To turn the course of Helicon that way ;
 Nor would the Nine consent the sacred tide
 Should purl amidst the traffic of Cheapside,
 Or tinkle in 'Change Alley, to amuse
 The leathern ears of stockjobbers and Jews.

A. Vouchsafe, at least, to pitch the key of rhym
 To themes more pertinent, if less sublime.

When ministers and ministerial arts ;
Patriots, who love good places at their hearts ;
When admirals, extoll'd for standing still,
Or doing nothing with a deal of skill ;
Gen'als, who will not conquer when they may.
Firm friends to peace, to pleasure, and good pay ;
When Freedom, wounded almost to despair,
Though Discontent alone can find out where ;
When themes like these employ the poet's tongue,
I hear as mute as if a syren sung.
Or tell me, if you can, what pow'r maintains
A Briton's scorn of arbitrary chains :
That were a theme might animate the dead,
And move the lips of poets cast in lead.

B. The cause, tho' worth the search, may yet elude
Conjecture and remark, however shrewd.
They take perhaps a well-directed aim,
Who seek it in his climate and his frame.
Lib'ral in all things else, yet Nature here
With stern severity deals out the year.
Winter invades the spring, and often pours
A chilling flood on summer's drooping flow'rs ;
Unwelcome vapours quench autumnal beams,
Ungenial blasts attending curl the streams :
The peasants urge their harvest, ply the fork
With double toil, and shiver at their work ;
Thus with a rigour, for his good design'd,
She rears her fav'rite man of all mankind.
His form robust and of elastic tone,
Proportion'd well, half muscle and half bone,
Supplies with warm activity and force
A mind well-lodg'd, and masculine of course.
Hence, Liberty, sweet Liberty inspires
And keeps alive his fierce but noble fires.
Patient of constitutional control,
He bears it with meek manliness of soul :
But, if Authority grow wanton, wo
To him that treads upon his free-born toe ;
One step beyond the bound'ry of the laws
Fires him at once in Freedom's glorious cause.

Thus proud Prerogative, not much rever'd,
Is seldom felt, though sometimes seen and heard ;
And in his cage, like parrot fine and gay,
Is kept to strut, look big, and talk away.

Born in a climate softer far than ours,
Not form'd, like us, with such Herculean pow'rs,
The Frenchman, easy, debonair, and brisk,
Give him his lass, his fiddle, and his frisk,
Is always happy, reign whoever may,
And laughs the sense of mis'ry far away.
He drinks his simple bev'rage with a gust ;
And, feasting on an onion and a crust,
We never feel th' alacrity and joy,
With which he shouts and carols *Vive le Roy*,
Fill'd with as much true merriment and glee,
As if he heard his king say—Slave, be free.

Thus happiness depends, as Nature shows,
Less on exterior things than most suppose.
Vigilant over all that he has made,
Kind Providence attends with gracious aid ;
Bids equity throughout his works prevail,
And weighs the nations in an even scale ,
He can encourage Slav'ry to a smile,
And fill with discontent a British isle.

A. Freeman and slave then, if the case be such,
Stand on a level ; and you prove too much :
If all men indiscriminately share
His fost'ring pow'r and tutelary care,
As well be yok'd by Despotism's hand,
As dwell at large in Britain's chartered land.

B. No. Freedom has a thousand charms to show,
That slaves, howe'er contented, never know.
The mind attains, beneath her happy reign,
The growth, that Nature meant she should attain ;
The varied fields of science, ever new,
Op'ning and wider op'ning on her view,
She ventures onward with a prosp'rous force,
While no base fear impedes her in her course.
Religion, richest favour of the skies,
Stands most reveal'd before the freeman's eyes ;

No shades of superstition blot the day,
 Liberty chases all that gloom away ;
 The soul emancipated, unoppress'd,
 Free to prove all things, and hold fast the best,
 Learns much ; and to a thousand list'ning minds
 Communicates with joy the good she finds ;
 Courage in arms, and ever prompt to show
 His manly forehead to the fiercest foe ;
 Glorious in war, but for the sake of peace,
 His spirits rising as his toils increase,
 Guards well what arts and industry have won,
 And Freedom claims him for her first-born son.
 Slaves fight for what were better cast away—
 The chain that binds them, and a tyrant's sway ;
 But they, that fight for freedom, undertake
 The noblest cause mankind can have at stake :—
 Religion, virtue, truth, whate'er we call
 A blessing—freedom is the pledge of all.
 O Liberty ! the pris'ner's pleasing dream,
 The poet's muse, his passion, and his theme ;
 Genius is thine, and thou art Fancy's nurse ;
 Lost without thee th' ennobling pow'rs of verse ;
 Heroic song from thy free touch acquires
 Its clearest tone, the rapture it inspires :
 Place me where Winter breathes his keenest air,
 And I will sing, if Liberty be there ;
 And I will sing at Liberty's dear feet,
 In Afric's torrid clime, or India's fiercest heat.

A. Sing where you please ; in such a cause I grant
 An English poet's privilege to rant ;
 But is not Freedom—at least is not ours
 Too apt to play the wanton with her pow'rs,
 Grow freakish, and, o'erleaping ev'ry mound,
 Spread anarchy and terror all around ?

B. Agreed. But would you sell or slay your horse
 For bounding and curvetting in his course ?
 Or if, when ridden with a careless rein,
 He break away, and seek the distant plain ?
 No. His high mettle, under good control,
 Gives him Olympic speed, and shoots him to the goal.

Let Discipline employ her wholesome arts ;
Let magistrates alert perform their parts ;
Not skulk or put on a prudential mask,
As if their duty were a desp'rate task ;
Let active Laws apply the needful curb,
To guard the Peace, that Riot would disturb ;
And Liberty, preserv'd from wild excess,
Shall raise no feuds for armies to suppress.
When Tumult lately burst his prison-door,
And set plebeian thousands in a roar ;
When he usurped Authority's just place,
And dar'd to look his master in the face ;
When the rude rabble's watchword was—Destroy,
And blazing London seem'd a second Troy ;
Liberty blush'd, and hung her drooping head,
Beheld their progress with the deepest dread ;
Blush'd, that effects like these she should produce,
Worse than the deeds of galley-slaves broke loose.
She loses in such storms her very name,
And fierce Licentiousness should bear the blame.

Incomparable gem ! thy worth untold ;
Cheap tho' blood-bought, and thrown away when sold ;
May no foes ravish thee, and no false friend
Betray thee, while professing to defend !
Prize it, ye ministers ; ye monarchs, spare ;
Ye patriots, guard it with a miser's care.

A. Patriots, alas ! the few that have been found,
Where most they flourish, upon English ground,
The country's need have scantily supplied,
And the last left the scene when Chatham died.

B. Not so—the virtue still adorns our age,
Though the chief actor died upon the stage.
In him Demosthenes was heard again ;
Liberty taught him her Athenian strain ;
She cloth'd him with authority and awe,
Spoke from his lips, and in his looks gave law.
His speech, his form, his action, full of grace,
And all his country beaming in his face,
He stood, as some inimitable hand
Would strive to make a Paul or Tully stand.

No sycophant or slave, that dar'd oppose
Her sacred cause, but trembl'd when he rose ;
And ev'ry vcnal stickler for the yoke
Felt himself crush'd at the first word he spoke.

Such men are rais'd to station and command,
When Providence means mercy to a land.
He speaks, and they appear ; to him they owe
Skill to direct, and strength to strike the blow ;
To manage with address, to seize with pow'r
The crisis of a dark decisive hour :
So Gideon earn'd a victory not his own ;
Subserviency his praise, and that alone.

Poor England ! thou art a devoted deer,
Beset with ev'ry ill but that of fear.
Thee nations hunt ; all mark thee for a prey ;
They swarm around thee, and thou stand'st at bay.
Undaunted still, though wearied and perplex'd ;
Once Chatham sav'd thee ; but who saves thee next ?
Alas ! the tide of pleasure sweeps along
All, that should be the boast of British song.
'Tis not the wreath, that once adorn'd thy brow,
The prize of happier times, will serve thee now.
Our ancestry, a gallant, Christian race,
Patterns of ev'ry virtue, ev'ry grace,
Confess'd a God ; they kneel'd before they fought,
And prais'd him in the victories he wrought.
Now from the dust of ancient days bring forth
Their sober zeal, integrity, and worth ;
Courage, ungrac'd by these, affronts the skies,
Is but the fire without the sacrifice.
The stream, that feeds the well-spring of the heart,
Not more invigorates life's noblest part,
Than Virtue quickens, with a warmth divine,
The pow'rs, that Sin has brought to a decline.

A. Th' inestimable Estimate of Brown
Rose like a paper-kite, and charm'd the town ;
But measures, plann'd and executed well,
Shifted the wind that rais'd it, and it fell.
He trod the very self-same ground you tread,
And Victory refuted all he said.

B. And yet his judgment was not fram'd amiss ;
 Its error, if it err'd, was merely this—
 He thought the dying hour already come,
 And a complete recov'ry struck him dumb.

But that effeminacy, folly, lust,
 Enervate and enfeeble, and needs must ;
 And that a nation shamefully debas'd,
 Will be despis'd and trampil'd on at last,
 Unless sweet Penitence her pow'rs renew,
 Is truth, if history itself be true.
 There is a time, and Justice marks the date,
 For long-forbearing Clemency to wait ;
 That hour elaps'd, th' incurable revolt
 Is punish'd, and down comes the thunderbolt.
 If Mercy *then* put by the threat'ning blow,
 Must she perform the same kind office *now* ?
 May she ! and, if offended Heav'n be still
 Accessible, and pray'r prevail, she will.
 'Tis not, however, insolence and noise,
 The tempest of tumultuary joys,
 Nor is it yet despondence and dismay
 Will win her visits, or engage her stay ;
 Pray'r only, and the penitential tear,
 Can call her smiling down, and fix her here.

But when a country (one that I could name)
 In prostitution sinks the sense of shame ;
 When infamous Venality, grown bold,
 Writes on his bosom, *To be let or sold* ;
 When Perjury, that Heav'n-defying vice,
 Sells oaths by tale, and at the lowest price,
 Stamps God's own name upon a lie just made,
 To turn a penny in the way of trade ;
 When Av'rice starves (and never hides his face)
 Two or three millions of the human race,
 And not a tongue inquires, how, where, or when,
 Though conscience will have twinges now and then ;
 When profanation of the sacred cause
 In all its parts, times, ministry, and laws,
 Bespeaks a land, once Christian, fall'n and lost,
 In all, that wars against that title most ;

What follows next, let cities of great name,
And regions long since desolate, proclaim.
Nineveh, Babylon, and ancient Rome,
Speak to the present times, and times to come ;
They cry aloud, in ev'ry careless ear,
Stop, while ye may ; suspend your mad career ;
O learn from our example and our fate,
Learn wisdom and repentance, ere too late.

Not only Vice disposes and prepares
The Mind, that slumbers sweetly in her snares,
To stoop to Tyranny's usurp'd command,
And bend her polish'd neck beneath his hand,
(A dire effect, by one of Nature's laws,
Unchangeably connected with its cause ;)
But Providence himself will intervene,
To throw his dark displeasure o'er the scene.
All are his instruments ; each form of war,
What burns at home, or threatens from afar,
Nature in arms, her elements at strife,
The storms that overset the joys of life,
Are but his rods to scourge a guilty land,
And waste it at the bidding of his hand.
He gives the word, and Mutiny soon roars
In all her gates, and shakes her distant shores ;
The standards of all nations are unfurl'd ;
She has one foe, and that one foe the world :
And, if he doom that people with a frown,
And mark them with a seal of wrath press'd down,
Obduracy takes place ; callous and tough,
The reprobated race grows judgment-proof :
Earth shakes beneath them, and Heav'n roars above ;
But nothing scares them from the course they love.
To the lascivious pipe and wanton song,
That charm down fear, they frolic it along,
With mad rapidity and unconcern,
Down to the gulf, from which is no return.
They trust in navies, and their navies fail—
God's curse can cast away ten thousand sail !
They trust in armies, and their courage dies ;
In wisdom, wealth, in fortune, and in lies ;

But all they trust in withers, as it must,
 When He commands, in whom they place no trust.
 Vengeance at last pours down upon their coast
 A long despis'd, but now victorious, host ;
 Tyranny sends the chain, that must abridge
 The noble sweep of all their privilege ;
 Gives liberty the last, the mortal shock ;
 Slips the slave's collar on, and snaps the lock

A. Such lofty strains embellish what you teach ;
 Mean you to prophesy, or but to preach ?

B. I know the mind, that feels indeed the fire
 The muse imparts, and can command the lyre,
 Acts with a force, and kindles with a zeal,
 Whate'er the theme, that others never feel.
 If human woes her soft attention claim,
 A tender sympathy pervades the frame ;
 She pours a sensibility divine
 Along the nerve of ev'ry feeling line.
 But if a deed, not tamely to be borne,
 Fire indignation and a sense of scorn,
 The strings are swept with such a pow'r, so loud,
 The storm of music shakes th' astonished crowd.
 So, when remote futurity is brought
 Before the keen inquiry of her thought,
 A terrible sagacity informs
 The poet's heart ; he looks to distant storms ;
 He hears the thunder ere the tempest low'rs ;
 And, arm'd with strength surpassing human pow'rs,
 Seizes events as yet unknown to man,
 And darts his soul into the dawning plan.
 Hence, in a Roman mouth, the graceful name
 Of prophet and of poet was the same ;
 Hence British poets too the priesthood shared,
 And every hallow'd druid was a bard.
 But no prophetic fires to me belong ;
 I play with syllables, and sport in song.

A. At Westminster, where little poets strive
 To set a distich upon six and five,
 Where Discipline helps op'ning buds of sense,
 And makes his pupils proud with silver pence,

I was a poet too ; but modern taste
 Is so refin'd, and delicate, and chaste,
 That verse, whatever fire the fancy warms,
 Without a creamy smoothness has no charms.
 Thus, all success depending on an ear,
 And thinking I might purchase it too dear,
 If sentiment were sacrific'd to sound,
 And truth cut short to make a period round,
 I judg'd a man of sense could scarce do worse
 Than caper in the morris-dance of verse.

B. Thus reputation is a spur to wit,
 And some wits flag through fear of losing it.
 Give me the line, that ploughs its stately course
 Like a proud swan, conquer'ing the stream by force ;
 That, like some cottage beauty, strikes the heart,
 Quite unindebted to the tricks of art.
 When Labour and when Dulness, club in hand,
 Like the two figures at St Dunstan's, stand,
 Beating alternately, in measur'd time,
 The clock-work tintinnabulum of rhyme,
 Exact and regular the sounds will be ;
 But such mere quarter-strokes are not for me.

From him who rears a poem lank and long,
 To him who strains his all into a song ;
 Perhaps some bonny Caledonian air,
 All birks and braes, though he was never there ;
 Or, having whelp'd a prologue with great pains,
 Feels himself spent, and fumbles for his brains ;
 A prologue interdash'd with many a stroke—
 An art contrived to advertise a joke,
 So that the jest is clearly to be seen,
 Not in the words—but in the gap between :
 Manner is all in all, whate'er is writ,
 The substitute for genius, sense, and wit.

To dally much with subjects mean and low,
 Proves that the mind is weak, or makes it so.
 Neglected talents rust into decay,
 And ev'ry effort ends in push-pin play.
 The man that means success, should soar above
 A soldier's feather, or a lady's glove ;

Else, summoning the muse to such a theme,
 The fruit of all her labour is whipp'd cream.
 As if an eagle flew aloft, and then
 Stoop'd from his highest pitch to pounce a wren.
 As if the poet, purposing to wed,
 Should carve himself a wife in gingerbread.

Ages elaps'd ere Homer's lamp appeared,
 And ages ere the Mantuan swan was heard :
 To carry nature lengths unknown before,
 To give a Milton birth, ask'd ages more.
 Thus Genius rose and set at order'd times,
 And shot a day-spring into distant climes,
 Ennobling ev'ry region that he chose ;
 He sunk in Greece, in Italy he rose ;
 And, tedious years of Gothic darkness pass'd,
 Emerg'd, all splendour, in our isle at last.
 Thus lovely halcyons dive into the main,
 Then show far off their shining plumes again.

A. Is genius only found in epic lays ?
 Prove this, and forfeit all pretence to praise.
 Make their heroic pow'rs your own at once,
 Or candidly confess yourself a dunce.

B. These were the chief : each interval of night
 Was grac'd with many an undulating light.
 In less illustrious bards his beauty shone
 A meteor, or a star ; in these, the sun.

The nightingale may claim the topmost bough,
 While the poor grasshopper must chirp below.
 Like him unnotic'd, I, and such as I,
 Spread little wings, and rather skip than fly :
 Perch'd on the meagre produce of the land,
 An ell or two of prospect we command ;
 But never peep beyond the thorny bound,
 Or oaken fence, that hems the paddock round.

In Eden, ere yet innocence of heart
 Had faded, poetry was not an art :
 Language, above all teaching, or, if taught,
 Only by gratitude and glowing thought,
 Elegant as simplicity, and warm
 As ecstasy, unmanac'd by form ;

Not prompted, as in our degen'rate days,
By low ambition and the thirst of praise ;
Was natural as is the flowing stream,
And yet magnificent—A God the theme !
That theme on earth exhausted, though above
'Tis found as everlasting as his love,
Man lavish'd all his thoughts on human things—
The feats of heroes, and the wrath of kings ;
But still, while Virtue kindled his delight,
The song was moral, and so far was right.
'Twas thus, till Luxury seduc'd the mind
To joys less innocent, as less refin'd ;
Then Genius danc'd a bacchanal ; he crown'd
The brimming goblet, seiz'd the thyrsus, bound
His brows with ivy, rush'd into the field
Of wild imagination, and there reel'd,
The victim of his own lascivious fires,
And, dizzy with delight, profan'd the sacred wires.
Anacreon, Horace, play'd in Greece and Rome
This bedlam part ; and others nearer home.
When Cromwell fought for pow'r, and while he reign'd
The proud protector of the pow'r he gained,
Religion harsh, intolerant, austere,
Parent of manners like herself severe,
Drew a rough copy of the Christian face,
Without the smile, the sweetness, or the grace ;
The dark and sullen humour of the time
Judg'd ev'ry effort of the muse a crime ;
Verse, in the finest mould of fancy cast,
Was lumber in an age so void of taste :
But when the Second Charles assum'd the sway,
And arts reviv'd beneath a softer day,
Then, like a bow long forc'd into a curve,
The mind, releas'd from too constrain'd a nerve,
Flew to its first position with a spring,
That made the vaulted roofs of Pleasure ring.
His court, the dissolute and hateful school
Of Wantonness, where vice was taught by rule,
Swarm'd with a scribbling herd, as deep inlaid
With brutal lust as ever Circe made.

From these a long succession, in the rage
 Of rank obscenity, debauch'd their age ;
 Nor ceas'd, till, ever anxious to redress
 The abuses of her sacred charge, the press,
 The Muse instructed a well-nurtur'd train
 Of abler votaries to cleanse the stain,
 And claim the palm for purity of song,
 That Lewdness had usurp'd and worn so long.
 Then decent Pleasantry and sterling Sense,
 That neither gave nor would endure offence,
 Whipp'd out of sight, with Satire just and keen,
 The puppy pack, that had defil'd the scene.

In front of these came Addison. In him
 Humour in holiday and sightly trim,
 Sublimity and Attic taste, combin'd,
 To polish, furnish, and delight the mind.
 Then Pope, as harmony itself exact,
 In verse well disciplin'd, complete, compact,
 Gave virtue and morality a grace,
 That, quite eclipsing Pleasure's painted face,
 Levied a tax of wonder and applause,
 E'en on the fools that trampled on their laws.
 But he (his musical finesse was such,
 So nice his ear, so delicate his touch)
 Made poetry a mere mechanic art ;
 And ev'ry warbler has his tune by heart.
 Nature imparting her satiric gift,
 Her serious mirth, to Arbuthnot and Swift,
 With droll sobriety they rais'd a smile
 At Folly's cost, themselves unmov'd the while.
 That constellation set, the world in vain
 Must hope to look upon their like again.

A. Are we then left ?—*B.* Not wholly in the dark ;
 Wit now and then, struck smartly, shows a spark,
 Sufficient to redeem the modern race
 From total night and absolute disgrace.
 While servile trick and imitative knack
 Confine the million in the beaten track,
 Perhaps some courser, who disdains the road,
 Snuffs up the wind, and flings himself abroad.

Contemporaries all surpass'd, see one ;
Short his career indeed, but ably run ;
Churchili, himself unconscious of his powers,
In penury consum'd his idle hours ;
And, like a scatter'd seed at random sown,
Was left to spring by vigour of his own.
Lifted at length, by dignity of thought
And dint of genius, to an affluent lot,
He laid his head in Luxury's soft lap,
And took, too often, there his easy nap.
If brighter beams than all he threw not forth,
'Twas negligence in him, not want of worth.
Surly, and slovenly, and bold, and coarse,
Too proud for art, and trusting in mere force,
Spendthrift alike of money and of wit,
Always at speed, and never drawing bit,
He struck the lyre in such a careless mood,
And so disdain'd the rules he understood,
The laurel seem'd to wait on his command,
He snatch'd it rudely from the Muses' hand.
Nature, exerting an unwearied power,
Forms, opens, and gives scent to ev'ry flower ;
Spreads the fresh verdure of the field, and leads
The dancing Naiads through the dewy meads :
She fills profuse ten thousand little throats
With music, modulating all their notes ;
And charms the woodland scenes and wilds unknown,
With artless airs and concerts of her own :
But seldom (as if fearful of expense)
Vouchsafes to man a poet's just pretence—
Fervency, freedom, fluency of thought,
Harmony, strength, words exquisitely sought ;
Fancy, that, from the bough that spans the sky,
Brings colours, dipp'd in Heav'n, that never die ;
A soul exalted above Earth, a mind
Skill'd in the characters that form mankind ;
And, as the Sun in rising beauty dress'd,
Looks to the westward from the dappled east,
And marks, whatever clouds may interpose,
Ere yet his race begins, its glorious close ;

An eye like his to catch the distant goal ;
 Or, ere the wheels of verse begin to roll,
 Like his to shed illuminating rays
 On every scene and subject it surveys :
 Thus grac'd, the man asserts a poet's name,
 And the world cheerfully admits the claim.
 Pity Religion has so seldom found
 A skilful guide into poetic ground ! [stray.
 The flowers would spring where'er she deign'd to
 And every muse attend her in her way.
 Virtue indeed meets many a rhyming friend,
 And many a compliment politely penn'd ;
 But, unattir'd in that becoming vest
 Religion weaves for her, and half undress'd,
 Stands in the desert, shiv'ring and forlorn,
 A wintry figure, like a wither'd thorn.
 The shelves are full, all other themes are sped ;
 Hackney'd and worn to the last flimsy thread,
 Satire has long since done his best ; and curst
 And loathsome Ribaldry has done his worst ;
 Fancy has sported all her powers away
 In tales, in trifles, and in children's play ;
 And 'tis the sad complaint, and almost true,
 Whate'er we write, we bring forth nothing new.
 'Twere new indeed to see a bard all fire,
 Touch'd with a coal from Heav'n, assume the lyre,
 And tell the world, still kindling as he sung,
 With more than mortal music on his tongue,
 That He, who died below, and reigns above,
 Inspires the song, and that his name is Love.

For, after all, if merely to beguile,
 By flowing numbers and a flow'ry style,
 The tædium that the lazy rich endure,
 Which now and then sweet poetry may cure ;
 Or, if to see the name of idle self,
 Stamp'd on the well-bound quarto, grace the shelf,
 To float a bubble on the breath of Fame,
 Prompt his endeavour and engage his aim,
 Debas'd to servile purposes of pride,
 How are the powers of genius misapplied !

The gift, whose office is the Giver's praise,
To trace him in his word, his works, his ways !
Then spread the rich discov'ry, and invite
Mankind to share in the divine delight ;
Distorted from its use and just design,
To make the pitiful possessor shine,
To purchase, at the fool-frequented fair
Of vanity, a wreath for self to wear,
Is profanation of the basest kind—
Proof of a trifling and a worthless mind.

A. Hail Sternhold, then ; and Hopkins, hail !—

B. Amen.

If flatt'ry, folly, lust, employ the pen ;
If acrimony, slander, and abuse,
Give it a charge to blacken and traduce ;
Though Butler's wit, Pope's numbers, Prior's ease,
With all that fancy can invent to please,
Adorn the polish'd periods as they fall,
One madrigal of theirs is worth them all.

A. 'Twould thin the ranks of the poetic tribe,
To dash the pen through all that you proscribe.

B. No matter—we could shift when they were not ;
And should, no doubt, if they were all forgot.

THE
PROGRESS OF ERROUR.

Si quid loquar audientum. Hor. Lib. iv. Od. 2.

SING, muse (if such a theme, so dark, so long,
May find a muse to grace it with a song),
By what unseen and unsuspected arts
The serpent Errour twines round human hearts ;
Tell where she lurks, beneath what flow'ry shades,
That not a glimpse of genuine light pervades,
The pois'nous, black, insinuating worm
Successfully conceals her loathsome form.
Take, if ye can, ye careless and supine,
Counsel and caution from a voice like mine !
Truths, that the theorist could never reach,
And observation taught me, I would teach.

Not all, whose eloquence the fancy fills,
Musical as the chime of tinkling rills,
Weak to perform, though mighty to pretend,
Can trace her mazy windings to their end ;
Discern the fraud beneath the specious lure,
Prevent the danger, or prescribe the cure.
The clear harangue, and cold as it is clear,
Falls soporific on the listless ear ;
Like quicksilver, the rhet'ric they display
Shines as it runs, but grasp'd at, slips away.

Plac'd for his trial on this bustling stage,
From thoughtless youth to ruminating age,
Free in his will to choose or to refuse,
Man may improve the crisis, or abuse ;
Else, on the fatalist's unrighteous plan,
Say to what bar amenable were man ?

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With nought in charge, he could betray no trust ;
And, if he fell, would fall because he must ;
If Love reward him, or if Vengeance strike,
His recompense in both unjust alike.

Divine authority within his breast
Brings ev'ry thought, word, action, to the test ;
Warns him or prompts, approves him or restrains,
As Reason, or as Passion, takes the reins.
Heav'n from above, and Conscience from within,
Cry in his startl'd ear—Abstain from sin !

The world around solicits his desire,
And kindles in his soul a treach'rous fire ;
While, all his purposes and steps to guard,
Peace follows Virtue as its sure reward ;
And Pleasure brings us surely in her train
Remorse, and Sorrow, and vindictive Pain.

Man, thus endu'd with an elective voice,
Must be supply'd with objects of his choice,
Where'er he turns, enjoyment and delight,
Or present, or in prospect, meet his sight ;
These open on the spot their honey'd store ;
Those call him loudly to pursuit of more.
His unexhausted mine the sordid vice
Avarice shows, and virtue is the price.
Here various motives his ambition raise—
Power, pomp, and splendour, and the thirst of praise ;
There Beauty woos him with expanded arms ;
E'en Bacchanalian madness has its charms.

Nor these alone, whose pleasures less refin'd
Might well alarm the most unguarded mind,
Seek to supplant his inexperienc'd youth,
Or lead him devious from the path of truth ;
Hourly allurements on his passions press,
Safe in themselves, but dang'rous in th' excess.

Hark ! how it floats upon the dewy air !
O what a dying, dying close was there !
'Tis harmony from yon sequester'd bow'r,
Sweet harmony, that soothes the midnight hour ?
Long ere the charioteer of day had run
His morning course, th' enchantment was begun ;

And he shall gild yon mountain's height again,
Ere yet the pleasing toil becomes a pain.

Is this the rugged path, the steep ascent,
That Virtue points to? Can a life thus spent
Lead to the bliss she promises the wise,
Detach the soul from Earth, and speed her to the skies?
Ye devotees to your ador'd employ,
Enthusiasts, drunk with an unreal joy,
Love makes the music of the blest above,
Heav'n's harmony is universal love;
And earthly sounds, tho' sweet and well combin'd,
And lenient as soft opiates to the mind,
Leave Vice and Folly unsubdu'd behind.

Gray dawn appears: the sportsman and his train
Speckle the bosom of the distant plain;
'Tis he, the Nimrod of the neighb'ring lairs;
Save that his scent is less acute than theirs,
For persevering chase, and headlong leaps,
True beagle as the staunchest hound he keeps.
Charg'd with the folly of his life's mad scene,
He takes offence, and wonders what you mean;
The joy the danger and the toil o'erpays—
'Tis exercise, and health, and length of days.
Again impetuous to the field he flies;
Leaps ev'ry fence but one, there falls and dies;
Like a slain deer, the tumbrel brings him home,
Unmiss'd but by his dogs and by his groom.

Ye Clergy, while your orbit is your place,
Lights of the world, and stars of human race;
But if eccentric ye forsake your sphere,
Prodigies ominous, and view'd with fear;
The comet's baneful influence is a dream;
Yours, real and pernicious in th' extreme.
What then!—are appetites and lusts laid down
With the same ease the man puts on his gown?
Will Av'rice and Concupiscence give place,
Charm'd by the sounds—Your Rev'rence, or Your
Grace?

No. But his own engagement binds him fast;
Or, if it does not, brands him to the last,

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What atheists call him—a designing knave,
 A mere church juggler, hypocrite, and slave.
 Oh, laugh or mourn with me the rueful jest,
 A cassock'd huntsman, and a fiddling priest !
 He from Italian songsters takes his cue :
 Set Paul to music, he shall quote him too.
 He takes the field, the master of the pack
 Cries—Well done saint ! and claps him on the back.
 Is this the path of sanctity ? Is this
 To stand a waymark in the road to bliss ?
 Himself a wand'rer from the narrow way,
 His silly sheep, what wonder if they stray ?
 Go, cast your orders at your Bishop's feet,
 Send your dishonour'd gown to Monmouth-street !
 The sacred function in your hands is made—
 Sad sacrilege ! no function, but a trade !

Occiduus is a pastor of renown,
 When he has pray'd and preach'd the Sabbath down,
 With wire and catgut he concludes the day,
 Quav'ring and semiquav'ring care away.
 The full concerto swells upon your ear ;
 All elbows shake. Look in, and you would swear
 The Babylonian tyrant with a nod
 Had summon'd them to serve his golden god.
 So well that thought th' employment seems to suit,
 Psalt'ry and sackbut, dulcimer and flute.
 Oh fie ! 'tis evangelical and pure :
 Observe each face, how sober and demure !
 Ecstasy sets her stamp on ev'ry mien ;
 Chins fall'n, and not an eye-ball to be seen.
 Still I insist, though music heretofore
 Has charm'd me much (not e'en Occiduus more),
 Love, joy, and peace, make harmony more meet
 For Sabbath ev'nings, and perhaps as sweet.

Will not the sickliest sheep of ev'ry flock
 Resort to this example as a rock ;
 There stand, and justify the foul abuse
 Of Sabbath hours with plausible excuse ?
 If apostolic gravity be free
 To play the fool on Sundays, why not we ?

If he the tinkling harpsichord regards
 As inoffensive, what offence in cards ?
 Strike up the fiddles, let us all be gay,
 Laymen have leave to dance, if parsons play.

Oh Italy !—thy Sabbaths will be soon
 Our Sabbaths, clos'd with mumm'ry and buffoon.
 Preaching and pranks will share the motley scene,
 Our's parcell'd out, as thine have ever been,
 God's worship and the mountebank between.
 What says the prophet ? Let that day be blest
 With holiness and consecrated rest.
 Pastime and business both it should exclude,
 And bar the door the moment they intrude :
 Nobly distinguish'd above all the six
 By deeds, in which the world must never mix.
 Hear him again. He calls it a delight,
 A day of luxury observ'd aright,
 When the glad soul is made Heav'n's welcome guest,
 Sits banquetting, and God provides the feast.
 But triflers are engag'd and cannot come ;
 Their answer to the call is—*Not at home.*

O the dear pleasures of the velvet plain,
 The painted tablets, dealt and dealt again !
 Cards with what rapture, and the polish'd die,
 The yawning chasm of indolence supply !
 Then to the dance, and make the sober moon
 Witness of joys that shun the sight of noon.
 Blame, Cynic, if you can, quadrille or ball,
 The snug close party, or the splendid hall,
 Where Night, down-stooping from her ebon throne,
 Views constellations brighter than her own.
 'Tis innocent, and harmless, and refin'd,
 The balm of care, Elysium of the mind.
 Innocent ! Oh if venerable Time
 Slain at the foot of Pleasure be no crime,
 Then, with his silver beard and magic wand,
 Let Comus rise archbishop of the land ;
 Let him your rubric and your feasts prescribe,
 Grand metropolitan of all the tribe.

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Of manners rough, and coarse athletic cast,
 The rank debauch suits Clodio's filthy taste.
 Rufillus, exquisitely form'd by rule,
 Not of the moral but the dancing school,
 Wonders at Clodio's follies, in a tone
 As tragical, as others at his own.
 He cannot drink five bottles, hilk the score,
 Then kill a constable, and drink five more ;
 But he can draw a pattern, make a tart,
 And has the ladies' etiquette by heart.
 Go, fool ; and, arm in arm with Clodio, plead
 Your cause before a bar you little dread ;
 But know, the law that bids the drunkard die,
 Is far too just to pass the trifier by.
 Both baby-featur'd, and of infant size,
 View'd from a distance, and with heedless eyes,
 Folly and Innocence are so alike,
 The diff'rence, though essential, fails to strike.
 Yet Folly ever has a vacant stare,
 A simp'ring count'nance, and a trifling air ;
 But Innocence, sedate, serene, erect,
 Delights us, by engaging our respect.
 Man, Nature's guest by invitation sweet,
 Receives from her both appetite and treat ;
 But, if he play the glutton and exceed,
 His benefactress blushes at the deed,
 For Nature, nice, as lib'ral to dispense,
 Made nothing but a brute the slave of sense.
 Daniel ate pulse by choice—example rare !
 Heav'n bless'd the youth, and made him fresh and fair.
 Gorgonius sits, abdominous and wan,
 Like a fat squab upon a Chinese fan :
 He snuffs far off th' anticipated joy ;
 Turtle and ven'son all his thoughts employ ;
 Prepares for meals as jockeys take a sweat,
 Oh, nauseous !—an emetic for a whet !
 Will Providence o'erlook the wasted good ?
 Temperance were no virtue if he could.
 That pleasures, therefore, or what such we call,
 Are hurtful, is a truth confess'd by all.

And some, that seem to threaten virtue less,
Still hurtful in th' abuse, or by th' excess.

Is man then only for his torment plac'd
The centre of delights he may not taste ?
Like fabl'd Tantalus, condemn'd to hear
The precious stream still purling in his ear,
Lip-deep in what he longs for, and yet curst
With prohibition, and perpetual thirst ?
No, wrangler—destitute of shame and sense,
The precept that enjoins him abstinence,
Forbids him none but the licentious joy,
Whose fruit, though fair, tempts only to destroy.
Remorse, the fatal egg by Pleasure laid
In ev'ry bosom where her nest is made,
Hatch'd by the beams of Truth, denies him rest,
And proves a raging scorpion in his breast.
No pleasure ? Are domestic comforts dead ?
Are all the nameless sweets of friendship fled ?
Has time worn out, or fashion put to shame,
Good sense, good health, good conscience, and good
All these belong to virtue, and all prove [fame ?
That virtue has a title to your love.
Have you no touch of pity, that the poor
Stand starv'd at your inhospitable door ?
Or if yourself, too scantily supplied,
Need help, let honest industry provide.
Earn, if you want ; if you abound, impart :
These both are pleasures to the feeling heart.
No pleasure ? has some sickly eastern waste
Sent us a wind to parch us at a blast ?
Can British Paradise no scenes afford
To please her satiated and indiff'rent lord ?
Are sweet philosophy's enjoyments run
Quite to the lees ? And has religion none ?
Brutes capable should tell you 'tis a lie,
And judge you from the kennel and the sty.
Delights like these, ye sensual and profane,
Ye are bid, begg'd, besought to entertain ;
Call'd to these crystal streams, do ye turn off
Obscene to swill and swallow at a trough ?

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Envy the beast then, on whom Heav'n bestows
Your pleasures, with no curses in the close.

Pleasure admitted in undue degree
Enslaves the will, nor leaves the judgment free.
'Tis not alone the grape's enticing juice
Unnerves the moral pow'rs, and mars their use ;
Ambition, av'rice, and the lust of fame,
And woman, lovely woman, does the same.
The heart, surrender'd to the ruling power
Of some ungovern'd passion ev'ry hour,
Finds by degrees the truths, that once bore sway,
And all their deep impressions, wear away ;
So coin grows smooth, in traffic current pass'd,
Till Cæsar's image is effac'd at last.

The breach, tho' small at first, soon op'ning wide,
In rushes folly with a full-moon tide,
Then welcome errors of whatever size,
To justify it by a thousand lies.
As creeping ivy clings to wood or stone,
And hides the ruin that it feeds upon ;
So sophistry cleaves close to and protects
Sin's rotten trunk, concealing its defects.
Mortals, whose pleasures are their only care,
First wish to be impos'd on, and then are.
And, lest the fulsome artifice should fail,
Themselves will hide its coarseness with a veil.
Not more industrious are the just and true,
To give to Virtue what is Virtue's due—
The praise of wisdom, comeliness, and worth,
And call her charms to public notice forth—
Than Vice's mean and disingenuous race,
To hide the shocking features of her face.
Her form with dress and lotion they repair ;
Then kiss their idol, and pronounce her fair.

The sacred implement I now employ
Might prove a mischief, or at best a toy ;
A trifle, if it move but to amuse ;
But, if to wrong the judgment and abuse.
Worse than a poniard in the basest hand,
It stabs at once the morals of a land.

Ye writers of what none with safety reads,
 Footing it in the dance that Fancy leads ;
 Ye novelists, who mar what ye would mend,
 Sniv'ling and driv'ling folly without end ;
 Whose corresponding misses fill the ream
 With sentimental frippery and dream,
 Caught in a delicate soft silken net
 By some lewd earl, or rakehell baronet :
 Ye pimps, who under virtue's fair pretence,
 Steal to the closet of young innocence,
 And teach her, inexperienc'd yet and green,
 To scribble as you scribbl'd at fifteen ;
 Who kindling a combustion of desire,
 With some cold moral think to quench the fire ;
 Though all your engineering proves in vain,
 The dribbling stream ne'er puts it out again :
 O that a verse had power, and could command
 Far, far away these flesh-flies of the land ;
 Who fasten without mercy on the fair,
 And suck, and leave a craving maggot there !
 Howe'er disguis'd th' inflammatory tale,
 And cover'd with a fine-spun specious veil ;
 Such writers, and such readers, owe the gust
 And relish of their pleasure all to lust.

But the muse, eagle-pinion'd, has in view
 A quarry more important still than you ;
 Down, down the wind she swims, and sails away,
 Now stoops upon it, and now grasps the prey.

Petronius ! all the Muses weep for thee ;
 But ev'ry tear shall scald thy memory :
 The Graces too, while Virtue at their shrine
 Lay bleeding under that soft hand of thine,
 Felt each a mortal stab in her own breast,
 Abhorr'd the sacrifice, and curs'd the priest.
 Thou polish'd and high-finish'd foe to truth,
 Graybeard corrupter of our list'ning youth,
 To purge and skim away the filth of vice,
 That so refin'd it might the more entice,
 Then pour it on the morals of thy son ;
 To taint *his* heart, was worthy of *thine own* !

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Now, while the poison all high life pervades,
 Write, if thou canst, one letter from the shades,
 One, and one only, charg'd with deep regret,
 That thy worse part, thy principles, live yet :
 One sad epistle thence may cure mankind
 Of the plague spread by bundles left behind.
 'Tis granted, and no plainer truth appears,
 Our most important are our earliest years ;
 The Mind, impressible and soft, with ease
 Imbibes and copies what she hears and sees,
 And through life's labyrinth holds fast the clew
 That Education gives her, false or true.
 Plants rais'd with tenderness are seldom strong ;
 Man's coltish disposition asks the thong ;
 And without discipline, the fav'rite child,
 Like a neglected forester, runs wild.
 But we, as if good qualities would grow
 Spontaneous, take but little pains to sow ;
 We give some Latin, and a smatch of Greek ;
 Teach him to fence and figure twice a-week ;
 And having done, we think the best we can,
 Praise his proficiency, and dub him man.

From school to Cam or Isis, and thence home ;
 And thence with all convenient speed to Rome,
 With rev'rend tutor clad in habit lay,
 To tease for cash, and quarrel with all day ;
 With memorandum-book for ev'ry town,
 And ev'ry post, and where the chaise broke down ;
 His stock, a few French phrases got by heart,
 With much to learn, but nothing to impart.
 The youth, obedient to his sire's commands,
 Sets off a wand'rer into foreign lands.
 Surpris'd at all they meet, the gosling pair,
 With awkward gait, stretch'd neck, and silly stare,
 Discover huge cathedrals built with stone,
 And steeples tow'ring high much like our own ;
 But show peculiar light by many a grin,
 At popish practices observ'd within.

Ere long, some bowing, smirking, smart abbé
 Remarks two loit'ers, that have lost their way ;

And being always prim'd with *politesse*
 For men of their appearance and address,
 With much compassion undertakes the task,
 To tell them more than they have wit to ask ;
 Points to inscriptions wheresoe'er they tread,
 Such as, when legible, were never read,
 But, being canker'd now and half worn out,
 Craze antiquarian brains with endless doubt ;
 Some headless hero, or some Cæsar shows—
 Defective only in his Roman nose ;
 Exhibits elevations, drawings, plans,
 Models of Herculean pots and pans ;
 And sells them medals, which, if neither rare
 Nor ancient, will be so, preserv'd with care.

Strange the recital ! from whatever cause
 His great improvement and new lights he draws,
 The squire, once bashful, is shamefac'd no more,
 But teems with powers he never felt before :
 Whether increas'd momentum, and the force,
 With which from clime to clime he sped his course
 (As axles sometimes kindle as they go),
 Chaf'd him, and brought dull nature to a glow ;
 Or whether clearer skies and softer air,
 That make Italian flowers so sweet and fair,
 Fresh'ning his lazy spirits as he ran,
 Unfolded genially and spread the man ;
 Returning he proclaims by many a grace,
 By shrugs and strange contortions of his face,
 How much a dunce, that has been sent to roam,
 Excels a dunce, that has been kept at home.

Accomplishments have taken virtue's place,
 And wisdom falls before exterior grace :
 We slight the precious kernel of the stone,
 And toil to polish its rough coat alone.
 A just deportment, manners grac'd with ease,
 Elegant phrase, and figure form'd to please,
 Are qualities, that seem to comprehend
 Whatever parents, guardians, schools intend ;
 Hence an unfurnish'd and a listless mind,
 Though busy, trifling ; empty, though refin'd ;

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Hence all that interferes, and dares to clash
 With indolence and luxury, is trash :
 While learning, once the man's exclusive pride,
 Seems verging fast towards the female side.
 Learning itself, receiv'd into a mind
 By nature weak, or viciously inclin'd,
 Serves but to lead philosophers astray,
 Where children would with ease discern the way.
 And of all arts sagacious dupes invent,
 To cheat themselves and gain the world's assent,
 The worst is—Scripture warp'd from its intent.

The carriage bowls along, and all are pleas'd
 If Tom be sober, and the wheels well greas'd ;
 But if the rogue have gone a cup too far,
 Left out his linchpin, or forgot his tar,
 It suffers interruption and delay,
 And meets with hindrance in the smoothest way.
 When some hypothesis, absurd and vain,
 Has fill'd with all its fumes a critic's brain,
 The text that sorts not with his darling whim,
 Though plain to others, is obscure to him.
 The will made subject to a lawless force,
 All is irregular and out of course ;
 And Judgment drunk, and brib'd to lose his way
 Winks hard, and talks of darkness at noonday.

A critic on the sacred book should be
 Candid and learn'd, dispassionate and free :
 Free from the wayward bias bigots feel,
 From fancy's influence, and intemp'rate zeal :
 But, above all (or let the wretch refrain,
 Nor touch the page he cannot but profane),
 Free from the domineering pow'r of lust ;
 A lewd interpreter is never just.

How shall I speak thee, or thy pow'r address,
 Thou god of our idolatry, the Press ?
 By thee religion, liberty, and laws,
 Exert their influence, and advance their cause ;
 By thee worse plagues than Pharaoh's land befd,
 Diffus'd, make Earth the vestibule of Hell ;

Thou fountain, at which drink the good and wise ;
 Thou ever-bubbling spring of endless lies ;
 Like Eden's dread probationary tree,
 Knowledge of good and evil is from thee.

No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest,
 Till half mankind were like himself possess'd.
 Philosophers, who darken and put out
 Eternal truth by everlasting doubt ;
 Church quacks, with passions under no command,
 Who fill the world with doctrines contraband,
 Discoverers of they know not what, confin'd
 Within no bounds—the blind that lead the blind ;
 To streams of popular opinion drawn,
 Deposit in those shallows all their spawn.
 The wriggling fry soon fill the creeks around,
 Pois'ning the waters where their swarms abound.
 Scorn'd by the nobler tenants of the flood,
 Minnows and gudgeons gorge th' unwholesome food.
 The propagated myriads spread so fast,
 E'en Lewenhoeck himself would stand aghast,
 Employ'd to calculate th' enormous sum,
 And own his crab-computing pow'rs o'ercome.
 Is this hyperbole ? The world well known,
 Your sober thoughts will hardly find it one.

Fresh confidence the speculatist takes
 From ev'ry hair-brain'd proselyte he makes ;
 And therefore prints. Himself but half deceiv'd,
 Till others have the soothing tale believ'd.
 Hence comment after comment, spun as fine
 As bloated spiders draw the flimsy line :
 Hence the same word, that bids our lusts obey,
 Is misapplied to sanctify their sway.
 If stubborn Greek refuse to be his friend,
 Hebrew or Syriac shall be forc'd to bend :
 If languages and copies all cry, No—
 Somebody prov'd it centuries ago.
 Like trout pursu'd, the critic in despair
 Darts to the mud, and finds his safety there.
 Women, whom custom has forbid to fly
 The scholar's pitch (the scholar best knows why),

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With all the simple and unletter'd poor,
Admire his learning, and almost adore.
Whoever errs, the priest can ne'er be wrong,
With such fine words familiar to his tongue.

Ye ladies ! (for indiff'rent in your cause
I should deserve to forfeit all applause,)
Whatever shocks or gives the least offence
To virtue, delicacy, truth, or sense
(Try the criterion, 'tis a faithful guide),
Nor has, nor can have, Scripture on its side.

None but an author knows an author's cares,
Or Fancy's fondness for the child she bears.
Committed once into the public arms,
The baby seems to smile with added charms.
Like something precious ventur'd far from shore,
'Tis valued for the danger's sake the more.
He views it with complacency supreme,
Solicits kind attention to his dream ;
And daily more enamour'd of the cheat,
Kneels, and asks Heav'n to bless the dear deceit.
So one, whose story serves at least to show
Men lov'd their own productions long ago,
Woo'd an unfeeling statue for his wife,
Nor rested till the gods had giv'n it life.
If some mere driv'ler suck the sugar'd fib,
One that still needs his leading-string and bib,
And praise his genius, he is soon repaid
In praise applied to the same part—his head :
For 'tis a rule, that holds for ever true,
Grant me discernment, and I grant it you.

Patient of contradiction as a child,
Affable, humble, diffident, and mild ;
Such was Sir Isaac, and such Boyle and Locke :
Your blund'rer is as sturdy as a rock.
The creature is so sure to kick and bite,
A muleteer's the man to set him right.
First Appetite enlists him Truth's sworn foe,
Then obstinate Self-will confirms him so.
Tell him he wanders ; that his error leads
To fatal ill ; that, though the path he treads

Be flow'ry, and he see no cause of fear,
 Death and the pains of Hell attend him there :
 In vain ; the slave of arrogance and pride,
 He has no hearing on the prudent side.
 His still refuted quirks he still repeats ;
 New rais'd objections with new quibbles meets ;
 Till, sinking in the quicksand he defends,
 He dies disputing, and the contest ends—
 But not the mischiefs ; they, still left behind,
 Like thistle-seeds, are sown by ev'ry wind.

Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill ;
 Bend the straight rule to their own crooked will ;
 And with a clear and shining lamp supplied,
 First put it out, then take it for a guide.
 Halting on crutches of unequal size,
 One leg by truth supported, one by lies ;
 They sidle to the goal with awkward pace,
 Secure of nothing—but to lose the race.

Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,
 And these reciprocally those again.
 The mind and conduct mutually imprint
 And stamp their image in each other's mint :
 Each, sire and dam, of an infernal race,
 Begetting and conceiving all that's base.

None sends his arrow to the mark in view,
 Whose hand is feeble, or his aim untrue.
 For though, ere yet the shaft is on the wing,
 Or when it first forsakes th' elastic string,
 It err but little from th' intended line,
 It falls at last far wide of his design :
 So he, who seeks a mansion in the sky,
 Must watch his purpose with a stedfast eye ;
 That prize belongs to none but the sincere ;
 The least obliquity is fatal here.

With caution taste the sweet Circean cup :
 He that sips often, at last drinks it up.
 Habits are soon assum'd ; but when we strive
 To strip them off, 'tis being flay'd alive.
 Call'd to the temple of impure delight,
 He that abstains, and he alone, does right.

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If a wish wander that way, call it home ;
 He cannot long be safe whose wishes roam.
 But, if you pass the threshold, you are caught ;
 Die then, if pow'r Almighty save you not.
 There hard'ning by degrees, till double steel'd,
 Take leave of nature's God, and God reveal'd ;
 Then laugh at all you trembled at before ;
 And, joining the free-thinkers' brutal roar,
 Swallow the two grand nostrums they dispense—
 That Scripture lies, and blasphemy is sense :
 If clemency, revolted by abuse
 Be damnable, then damn'd without excuse.

Some dream that they can silence, when they will,
 The storm of passion, and say, *Peace, be still* ;
 But “ *Thus far and no further,*” when address'd
 To the wild wave, or wilder human breast,
 Implies authority that never can,
 That never ought to be the lot of man.

But muse forbear ; long flights forbode a fall ;
 Strike on the deep-ton'd chord the sum of all.

Hear the just law—the judgment of the skies !
 He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies :
 And he that *will* be cheated to the last,
 Delusions strong as Hell shall bind him fast.
 But if the wand'rer his mistake discern,
 Judge his own ways, and sigh for a return,
 Bewilder'd once, must he bewail his loss
 For ever and for ever ? No—the cross !
 There and there only (though the deist rave,
 And atheist, if Earth bear so base a slave) ;
 There and there only is the pow'r to save.
 There no delusive hope invites despair ;
 No mock'ry meets you, no deception there.
 The spells and charms, that blinded you before,
 All vanish there, and fascinate no more.

I am no preacher, let this hint suffice—
 The cross, once seen, is death to ev'ry vice :
 Else he that hung there suffer'd all his pain,
 Bled, groan'd, and agoniz'd, and died, in vain.

TRUTH.

Pensantur trutina. Hor. Lib. ii. Epist. 1.

MAN, on the dubious waves of error toss'd,
 His ship half-founder'd, and his compass lost,
 Sees, far as human optics may command,
 A sleeping fog, and fancies it dry land :
 Spreads all his canvass, ev'ry sinew plies ;
 Pants for't, aims at it, enters it, and dies !
 Then farewell all self-satisfying schemes,
 His well-built systems, philosophic dreams ;
 Deceitful views of future bliss farewell !—
 He reads his sentence at the flames of Hell.

Hard lot of man—to toil for the reward
 Of virtue, and yet lose it ! Wherefore hard ?
 He that would win the race must guide his horse
 Obedient to the customs of the course ;
 Else, though unequall'd to the goal he flies,
 A meaner than himself shall gain the prize.
 Grace leads the right way : if you choose the wrong,
 Take it and perish ; but restrain your tongue ;
 Charge not, with light sufficient, and left free,
 Your wilful suicide on God's decree.

O how unlike the complex works of man,
 Heav'n's easy, artless, unencumber'd plan !
 No meretricious graces to beguile,
 No clust'ring ornaments to clog the pile ;
 From ostentation as from weakness free,
 It stands like the cerulean arch we see,
 Majestic in its own simplicity.
 Inscrib'd above the portal, from afar
 Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
 Legible only by the light they give,
 Stand the soul-quick'ning words—*Believe and live.*
 Too many, shock'd at what should charm them most,
 Despise the plain direction, and are lost.

Heav'n on such terms ! (they cry with proud disdain,)

Incredible, impossible, and vain !—

Rebel, because 'tis easy to obey ;

And scorn, for its own sake, the gracious way.

These are the sober, in whose cooler brains

Some thought of immortality remains ;

The rest, too busy or too gay to wait

On the sad theme, their everlasting state,

Sport for a day, and perish in a night,

The foam upon the waters not so light.

Who judg'd the pharisee ? What odious cause

Expos'd him to the vengeance of the laws ?

Had he seduc'd a virgin, wrong'd a friend,

Or stabb'd a man to serve some private end ?

Was blasphemy his sin ? Or did he stray

From the strict duties of the sacred day ?

Sit long and late at the carousing board ?

(Such were the sins with which he charg'd his Lord.)

No—the man's morals were exact, what then ?

'Twas his ambition to be seen of men ;

His virtues were his pride ; and that one vice

Made all his virtues gewgaws of no price ;

He wore them as fine trappings for a show,

A praying, synagogue-frequenting beau.

The self-applauding bird, the peacock, see—

Mark what a sumptuous pharisee is he !

Meridian sun-beams tempt him to unfold

His radiant glories, azure, green, and gold :

He treads as if, some solemn music near,

His measur'd step were govern'd by his ear :

And seems to say—Ye meaner fowl, give place,

I am all splendour, dignity, and grace !

Not so the pheasant on his charms presumes,

Though he too has a glory in his plumes.

He, christianlike, retreats with modest mien

To the close copse, or far-sequester'd green,

And shines without desiring to be seen.

The plea of works, as arrogant and vain,

Heav'n turns from with abhorrence and disdain ;

Not more affronted by avow'd neglect,
 Than by the mere dissembler's feign'd respect.
 What is all righteousness that men devise ?
 What—but a sordid bargain for the skies ?
 But Christ as soon would abdicate his own,
 As stoop from Heav'n to sell the proud a throne.

His dwelling a recess in some rude rock,
 Book, beads, and maple-dish, his meagre stock ;
 In shirt of hair and weeds of canvass dress'd,
 Girt with a bell-rope that the pope has bless'd ;
 Ajust with stripes told out for ev'ry crime,
 And sore tormented long before his time ;
 His pray'r preferr'd to saints that cannot aid ;
 His praise postpon'd, and never to be paid ;
 See the sage hermit, by mankind admir'd,
 With all that bigotry adopts inspir'd,
 Wearing out life in his religious whim,
 Till his religious whimsey wears out him.
 His works, his abstinence, his zeal allow'd,
 You think him humble—God accounts him proud ;
 High in demand, though lowly in pretence,
 Of all his conduct this the genuine sense—
 My penitential stripes, my streaming blood,
 Have purchas'd Heav'n, and prove my title good.

Turn eastward now, and Fancy shall apply
 To your weak sight her telescopic eye.
 The bramin kindles on his own bare head
 The sacred fire, self-torturing his trade,
 His voluntary pains, severe and long,
 Would give a barb'rous air to British song ;
 No grand inquisitor could worse invent,
 Than he contrives to suffer, well content.

Which is the saintlier worthy of the two ?
 Past all dispute, yon anchorite, say you.
 Your sentence and mine differ. What's a name !
 I say the bramin has the fairer claim.
 If suff'rings, Scripture no where recommends,
 Devis'd by self to answer selfish ends,
 Give saintship, then all Europe must agree
 Ten starv'ling hermits suffer less than he.

The truth is (if the truth may suit your ear,
 And prejudice have left a passage clear),
 Pride has attain'd its most luxuriant growth,
 And poison'd ev'ry virtue in them both.
 Pride may be pamper'd while the flesh grows lean ;
 Humility may clothe an English dean ;
 That grace was Cowper's—his, confess'd by all—
 Though plac'd in golden Durham's second stall.
 Not all the plenty of a bishop's board,
 His palace, and his lacqueys, and " My Lord,"
 More nourish pride, that condescending vice,
 Than abstinence, and beggary, and lice ;
 It thrives in mis'ry, and abundant grows :
 In mis'ry fools upon themselves impose.

But why before us protestants produce
 An Indian mystic, or a French recluse ?
 Their sin is plain ; but what have we to fear,
 Reform'd and well instructed ? You shall hear.

Yon ancient prude, whose wither'd features show
 She might be young some forty years ago,
 Her elbows pinioned close upon her hips,
 Her head erect, her fan upon her lips,
 Her eye-brows arch'd, her eyes both gone astray
 To watch yon am'rous couple in their play,
 With bony and unkerchief'd neck defies
 The rude inclemency of wintry skies,
 And sails with lappet-head and mincing airs
 Duly at clink of bell to morning pray'rs.
 To thrift and parsimony much inclin'd,
 She yet allows herself that boy behind ;
 The shiv'ring urchin, bending as he goes,
 With slipshod heels, and dewdrop at his nose ;
 His predecessor's coat advanc'd to wear,
 Which future pages yet are doom'd to share,
 Carries her Bible tuck'd beneath his arm,
 And hides his hands to keep his fingers warm.

She, half an angel in her own account,
 Doubts not hereafter with the saints to mount,
 Though not a grace appears on strictest search,
 But that she fasts, and *item*, goes to church.

Conscious of age, she recollects her youth,
 And tells, not always with an eye to truth,
 Who spann'd her waist, and who, where'er he came,
 Scrawl'd upon glass Miss Bridget's lovely name ;
 Who stole her slipper, fill'd it with tokay,
 And drank the little bumper ev'ry day.
 Of temper as envenom'd as an asp,
 Censorious, and her ev'ry word a wasp ;
 In faithful mem'ry she records the crimes,
 Or real or fictitious, of the times ;
 Laughs at the reputations she has torn,
 And holds them dangling at arm's length in scorn.

Such are the fruits of sanctimonious pride,
 Of malice fed while flesh is mortified :
 Take, Madam, the reward of all your pray'rs,
 Where hermits and where bramins meet with theirs ;
 Your portion is with them.—Nay, never frown,
 But, if you please, some fathoms lower down.

Artist attend—your brushes and your paint—
 Produce them—take a chair—now draw a saint.
 Oh sorrowful and sad ! the streaming tears
 Channel her cheeks—a Niobe appears !
 Is this a saint ? Throw tints and all away—
 'True Piety is cheerful as the day,
 Will weep indeed and heave a pitying groan
 For others' woes, but smiles upon her own.

What purpose has the King of saints in view ?
 Why falls the Gospel like a gracious dew ?
 To call up plenty from the teeming earth,
 Or curse the desert with a tenfold dearth ?
 Is it that Adam's offspring may be sav'd
 From servile fear, or be the more enslav'd ?
 To loose the links that gall'd mankind before,
 Or bind them faster on, and add still more ?
 The freeborn Christian has no chains to prove,
 Or, if a chain, the golden one of love :
 No fear attends to quench his glowing fires,
 What fear he feels, his gratitude inspires.
 Shall he, for such deliv'rance freely wrought,
 Recompense ill ? He trembles at the thought.

His Master's int'rest and his own combin'd
 Prompt ev'ry movement of his heart and mind :
 Thought, word, and deed, his liberty evince,
 His freedom is the freedom of a prince.

Man's obligations infinite, of course
 His life should prove that he perceives their force ;
 His utmost he can render is but small—
 The principle and motive all in all.
 You have two servants—Tom, an arch, sly rogue,
 From top to toe the Geta now in vogue,
 Genteel in figure, easy in address,
 Moves without noise, and swift as an express,
 Reports a message with a pleasing grace,
 Expert in all the duties of his place ;
 Say, on what hinge does his obedience move ?
 Has he a world of gratitude and love ?
 No, not a spark—'tis all mere sharper's play ;
 He likes your house, your housemaid, and your pay ;
 Reduce his wages, or get rid of her,
 Tom quits you, with—Your most obedient, Sir.

The dinner serv'd, Charles takes his usual stand,
 Watches your eye, anticipates command ;
 Sighs if perhaps your appetite should fail ;
 And if he but suspects a frown, turns pale ;
 Consults all day your int'rest and your ease,
 Richly rewarded if he can but please ;
 And, proud to make his firm attachment known,
 To save your life would nobly risk his own.

Now which stands highest in your serious thought ?
 Charles, without doubt, say you—and so he ought ;
 One act, that from a thankful heart proceeds,
 Excels ten thousand mercenary deeds.

Thus Heav'n approves, as honest and sincere,
 The work of gen'rous love and filial fear ;
 But with averted eyes th' omniscient Judge
 Scorns the base hireling, and the slavish drudge.
 Where dwell these matchless saints ?—old Curio cries
 E'en at your side, Sir, and before your eyes,
 The favour'd few—th' enthusiasts you despise.

And pleas'd at heart, because on holy ground
Sometimes a canting hypocrite is found,
Reproach a people with his single fall,
And cast his filthy raiment at them all ;
Attend !—an apt similitude shall show
Whence springs the conduct that offends you so.

See where it smokes along the sounding plain,
Blown all aslant, a driving, dashing rain,
Peal upon peal redoubling all around,
Shakes it again and faster to the ground ;
Now flashing wide, now glancing as in play,
Swift beyond thought the lightnings dart away.
Ere yet it came the trav'ler urg'd his steed,
And hurried, but with unsuccessful speed ;
Now drench'd throughout, and hopeless of his case,
He drops the rein, and leaves him to his pace.
Suppose, unlook'd for in a scene so rude,
Long hid by interposing hill or wood,
Some mansion, neat and elegantly dress'd,
By some kind hospitable heart possess'd,
Offer him warmth, security, and rest ;
Think with what pleasure, safe and at his ease,
He hears the tempest howling in the trees ;
What glowing thanks his lips and heart employ,
While danger past is turn'd to present joy.
So fares it with the sinner, when he feels
A growing dread of vengeance at his heels :
His conscience, like a glassy lake before,
Lash'd into foaming waves, begins to roar ;
The law grown clamorous, though silent long,
Arraigns him—charges him with ev'ry wrong—
Asserts the rights of his offended Lord,
And death or restitution is the word :
The last impossible, he fears the first,
And, having well deserv'd, expects the worst.
Then welcome refuge, and a peaceful home ;
Oh for a shelter from the wrath to come !
Crush me, ye rocks ! ye falling mountains hide,
Or bury me in ocean's angry tide.—

The scrutiny of those all-seeing eyes
 I dare not—And you need not, God replies ;
 The remedy you want I freely give :
 The Book shall teach you—read, believe, and live !
 'Tis done—the raging storm is heard no more,
 Mercy receives him on her peaceful shore :
 And Justice, guardian of the dread command,
 Drops the red vengeance from his willing hand.
 A soul redeem'd demands a life of praise ;
 Hence the complexion of his future days,
 Hence a demeanour holy and unspeck'd,
 And the world's hatred, as its sure effect.

Some lead a life unblameable and just,
 Their own dear virtue their unshaken trust :
 They never sin—or if (as all offend)
 Some trivial slips their daily walk attend,
 The poor are near at hand, the charge is small,
 A slight gratuity atones for all.
 For though the pope has lost his int'rest here,
 And pardons are not sold as once they were,
 No papist more desirous to compound,
 Than some grave sinners upon English ground.
 That plea refuted, other quirks they seek—
 Mercy is infinite, and man is weak ;
 The future shall obliterate the past,
 And Heav'n no doubt shall be their home at last.

Come then—a still, small whisper in your ear—
 He has no hope who never had a fear ;
 And he that never doubted of his state,
 He may perhaps—perhaps he may—too late.

The path to bliss abounds with many a snare ;
 Learning is one, and wit, however rare.
 The Frenchman, first in literary fame,
 (Mention him if you please. Voltaire?—The same.)
 With spirit, genius, eloquence, supplied,
 Liv'd long, wrote much, laugh'd heartily, and died.
 The Scripture was his jest-book, whence he drew
Bon mots to gall the Christian and the Jew ;
 An infidel in health, but what when sick ?
 Oh—then a text would touch him at the quick :

View him at Paris in his last career,
 Surrounding throngs the demigod revere ;
 Exalted on his pedestal of pride,
 And fum'd with frankincense on ev'ry side,
 He begs their flatt'ry with his latest breath,
 And smother'd in't at last, is prais'd to death.

Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,
 Pillow and bobbins all her little store ;
 Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,
 Shuffling her threads about the livelong day,
 Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night
 Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light ;
 She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
 Has little understanding, and no wit,
 Receives no praise ; but, though her lot be such,
 (Toilsome and indigent) she renders much ;
 Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true—
 A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew ;
 And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes
 Her title to a treasure in the skies.

O happy peasant ! Oh unhappy bard !
 His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward ;
 He prais'd perhaps for ages yet to come,
 She never heard of half a mile from home :
 He lost in errors his vain heart prefers,
 She safe in the simplicity of hers.

Not many wise, rich, noble, or profound
 In science, win one inch of heav'nly ground.
 And is it not a mortifying thought
 The poor should gain it, and the rich should not ?
 No—the voluptuaries, who ne'er forget
 One pleasure lost, lose Heav'n without regret ;
 Regret would rouse them, and give birth to pray'r ;
 Pray'r would add faith, and faith would fix them there.

Not that the Former of us all, in this,
 Or aught he does, is govern'd by caprice ;
 The supposition is replete with sin,
 And bears the brand of blasphemy burnt in.
 Not so—the silver trumpet's heav'nly call
 Sounds for the poor, but sounds alike for all :

Kings are invited, and would kings obey,
 No slaves on earth more welcome were than they :
 But royalty, nobility, and state,
 Are such a dead preponderating weight,
 That endless bliss (how strange soe'er it seem)
 In counterpoise, flies up and kicks the beam.
 'Tis open, and ye cannot enter—why ?
 Because ye will not, Conyers would reply—
 And he says much that many may dispute,
 And cavil at with ease, but none refute.
 O bless'd effect of penury and want ;
 The seed sown there, how vig'rous is the plant !
 No soil like poverty for growth divine,
 As leanest land supplies the richest wine.
 Earth gives too little, giving only bread,
 To nourish pride, or turn the weakest head :
 To them the sounding jargon of the schools
 Seems what it is—a cap and bell for fools :
 The light they walk by, kindled from above,
 Shows them the shortest way to life and love :
 They, strangers to the controversial field,
 Where deists, always foil'd, yet scorn to yield,
 And never check'd by what impedes the wise,
 Believe, rush forward, and possess the prize.

Envy, ye great, the dull unletter'd small :
 Ye have much cause for envy—but not all.
 We boast some rich ones whom the Gospel sways,
 And one who wears a coronet and prays ;
 Like gleanings of an olive-tree they show,
 Here and there one upon the topmost bough.

How readily upon the Gospel plan,
 That question has its answer—What is man ?
 Sinful and weak, in ev'ry sense a wretch ;
 An instrument, whose chords upon the stretch,
 And strain'd to the last screw that he can bear,
 Yield only discord in his Maker's ear :
 Once the blest residence of truth divine,
 Glorious as Solyma's interior shrine,
 Where, in his own oracular abode,
 Dwelt visibly the light-creating God ;

But made long since, like Babylon of old,
 A den of mischiefs never to be told :
 And she, once mistress of the realms around,
 Now scatter'd wide, and no where to be found,
 As soon shall rise and reascend the throne,
 By native pow'r and energy her own,
 As Nature, at her own peculiar cost,
 Restore to man the glories he has lost.
 Go—bid the winter cease to chill the year,
 Replace the wand'ring comet in his sphere,
 Then boast (but wait for that unhop'd-for hour)
 The self-restoring arm of human pow'r.
 But what is man in his own proud esteem ?
 Hear him—himself the poet and the theme :
 A monarch cloth'd with majesty and awe,
 His mind his kingdom, and his will his law,
 Grace in his mien, and glory in his eyes,
 Supreme on earth, and worthy of the skies,
 Strength in his heart, dominion in his nod,
 And, thunderbolts excepted, quite a God !
 So sings he, charm'd with his own mind and form,
 The song magnificent—the theme a worm !
 Himself so much the source of his delight,
 His Maker has no beauty in his sight.
 See where he sits, contemplative and fix'd,
 Pleasure and wonder in his features mix'd,
 His passions tam'd and all at his control,
 How perfect the composure of his soul !
 Complacency has breath'd a gentle gale
 O'er all his thoughts, and swell'd his easy sail :
 His books well trimm'd and in the gayest style,
 Like regimented coxcombs, rank and file,
 Adorn his intellects as well as shelves,
 And teach him notions splendid as themselves :
 The Bible only stands neglected there,
 Though that of all most worthy of his care ;
 And, like an infant troublesome awake,
 Is left to sleep for peace and quiet's sake

What shall the man deserve of human kind,
 Whose happy skill and industry combin'd

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Shall prove (what argument could never yet)
 The Bible an imposture and a cheat ?
 The praises of the libertine profess'd,
 The worst of men, and curses of the best.
 Where should the living, weeping o'er his woes ;
 The dying, trembling at the awful close ;
 Where the betray'd, forsaken, and oppress'd,
 The thousands whom the world forbids to rest ;
 Where should they find (those comforts at an end
 The Scripture yields), or hope to find, a friend ?
 Sorrow might muse herself to madness then,
 And seeking exile from the sight of men,
 Bury herself in solitude profound,
 Grow frantic with her pangs, and bite the ground.
 Thus often Unbelief, grown sick of life,
 Flies to the tempting pool, or felon knife.
 The jury meet, the coroner is short,
 And lunacy the verdict of the court ;
 Reverse the sentence, let the truth be known,
 Such lunacy is ignorance alone ;
 They knew not, what some bishops may not know,
 That Scripture is the only cure of woe ;
 That field of promise, how it flings abroad
 Its odour o'er the Christian's thorny road !
 The soul, reposing on assur'd relief,
 Feels herself happy amidst all her grief,
 Forgets her labour as she toils along,
 Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song.

But the same word, that like the polish'd share,
 Ploughs up the roots of a believer's care,
 Kills too the flow'ry weeds, where'er they grow,
 That bind the sinner's Bacchanalian brow.
 Oh that unwelcome voice of heav'nly love,
 Sad messenger of mercy from above !
 How does it grate upon his thankless ear,
 Crippling his pleasures with the cramp of fear !
 His will and judgment at continual strife,
 That civil war embitters all his life :
 In vain he points his pow'rs against the skies,
 In vain he closes or averts his eyes,

Truth will intrude—she bids him yet beware ;
And shakes the sceptic in the scorner's chair.

Though various foes against the Truth combine,
Pride above all opposes her design ;
Pride, of a growth superior to the rest,
The subtlest serpent with the loftiest crest,
Swells at the thought, and, kindling into rage,
Would hiss the cherub Mercy from the stage.

And is the soul indeed so lost—she cries,
Fall'n from her glory, and too weak to rise ?
Torpid and dull beneath a frozen zone,
Has she no spark that may be deem'd her own ?
Grant her indebted to what zealots call
Grace undeserv'd, yet surely not for all—
Some beams of rectitude she yet displays,
Some love of virtue, and some pow'r to praise ;
Can lift herself above corporeal things,
And, soaring on her own unborrow'd wings,
Possess herself of all that's good or true,
Assert the skies, and vindicate her due.
Past indiscretion is a venial crime,
And if the youth, unmellow'd yet by time,
Bore on his branch, luxuriant then and rude,
Fruits of a blighted size, austere and crude,
Maturer years shall happier stores produce,
And meliorate the well-concocted juice.
Then, conscious of her meritorious zeal,
To Justice she may make her bold appeal,
And leave to Mercy, with a tranquil mind,
The worthless and unfruitful of mankind.
Hear then how Mercy, slighted and defied,
Retorts th' affront against the crown of Pride.

Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhorr'd,
And the fool with it, who insults his Lord.
Th' atonement, a Redeemer's love has wrought,
Is not for you—the righteous need it not.
Seest thou yon harlot, wooing all she meets,
The worn-out nuisance of the public streets,
Herself from morn to night, from night to morn,
Her own abhorrence, and as much your scorn :

The gracious show'rs, unlimited and free,
Shall fall on her, when Heav'n denies it thee.
Of all that wisdom dictates, this the drift,
That man is dead in sin, and life a gift.

Is virtue, then, unless of Christian growth,
Mere fallacy, or foolishness, or both ?
Ten thousand sages lost in endless wo,
For ignorance of what they could not know ?
That speech betrays at once a bigot's tongue,
Charge not a God with such outrageous wrong.
Truly not I—the partial light men have,
My creed persuades me, well employ'd, may save ;
While he that scorns the noonday beam, perverse,
Shall find the blessing, unimprov'd, a curse.
Let heathen worthies, whose exalted mind
Left sensuality and dross behind,
Possess for me their undisputed lot,
And take unenvied the reward they sought :
But still in virtue of a Saviour's plea,
Not blind by choice, but destin'd not to see.
Their fortitude and wisdom were a flame
Celestial, though they knew not whence it came,
Deriv'd from the same source of light and grace,
That guides the Christian in his swifter race ;
Their judge was conscience, and her rule their law,
That rule, pursued with rev'rence and with awe,
Led them, however falt'ring, faint, and slow,
From what they knew, to what they wish'd to know.
But let not him, that shares a brighter day,
Traduce the splendour of a noontide ray,
Prefer the twilight of a darker time,
And deem his base stupidity no crime :
The wretch, who slights the bounty of the skies,
And sinks, while favour'd with the means to rise,
Shall find them rated at their full amount ;
The good he scorn'd all carried to account.

Marshalling all his terrors as he came,
Thunder, and earthquake, and devouring flame,
From Sinai's top Jehovah gave the law
Life for obedience, death for ev'ry flaw.

When the great Sov'reign would his will express,
 He gives a perfect rule ; what can he less ?
 And guards it with a sanction as severe
 As vengeance can inflict, or sinners fear :
 Else his own glorious rights he would disclaim,
 And man might safely trifle with his name.
 He bids him glow with unremitting love
 To all on earth, and to himself above ;
 Condemns th' injurious deed, the slanderous tongue,
 The thought that meditates a brother's wrong :
 Brings not alone the more conspicuous part,
 His conduct, to the test, but tries his heart.

Hark ! universal nature shriek and groan'd,
 'Twas the last trumpet—see the Judge enthron'd !
 Rouse all your courage at your utmost need,
 Now summon ev'ry virtue, stand and plead.
 What ! silent ? Is your boasting heard no more ?
 That self-renouncing wisdom, learn'd before,
 Had shed immortal glories on your brow,
 That all your virtues cannot purchase now.

All joy to the believer ! He can speak—
 Trembling yet happy, confident yet meek.

Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot,
 And cut up all my follies by the root,
 I never trusted in an arm but thine,
 Nor hop'd, but in thy righteousness divine :
 My pray'rs and alms, imperfect and defil'd,
 Were but the feeble efforts of a child ;
 Howe'er perform'd, it was their brightest part,
 That they proceeded from a grateful heart ;
 Cleans'd in thine own all purifying blood,
 Forgive their evil, and accept their good ;
 I cast them at thy feet—my only plea
 Is what it was, dependence upon thee,
 While struggling in the vale of tears below,
 That never fail'd, nor shall it fail me now.

Angelic gratulations rend the skies,
 Pride falls unpitied, never more to rise,
 Humility is crown'd, and Faith receives the prize.

EXPOSTULATION.

Tantane, tam patiens, nullo certamine tolli
 Dona sines ? Virg.

WHY weeps the muse for England ? What appears
 In England's case, to move the muse to tears ?
 From side to side of her delightful isle
 Is she not cloth'd with a perpetual smile ?
 Can Nature add a charm, or Art confer
 A new-found luxury not seen in her ?
 Where under heav'n is pleasure more pursued,
 Or where does cold reflection less intrude ?
 Her fields a rich expanse of wavy corn,
 Pour'd out from Plenty's overflowing horn ;
 Ambrosial gardens, in which Art supplies
 The fervour and the force of Indian skies ;
 Her peaceful shores, where busy Commerce waits
 To pour his golden tide through all her gates ;
 Whom fiery suns, that scorch the russet spice
 Of eastern groves, and oceans floor'd with ice,
 Forbid in vain to push his daring way
 To darker climes, or climes of brighter day ;
 Whom the winds waft where'er the billows roll,
 From the world's girdle to the frozen pole ;
 The chariots bounding in her wheel-worn streets,
 Her vaults below, where ev'ry vintage meets ;
 Her theatres, her revels, and her sports ;
 The scenes to which not youth alone resorts,
 But age, in spite of weakness and of pain,
 Still haunts, in hope to dream of youth again ;
 All speak her happy : let the muse look round
 From East to West, no sorrow can be found :
 Or only what, in cottages confin'd,
 Sighs unregarded to the passing wind.
 Then wherefore weep for England ? What appears
 In England's case to move the muse to tears ?

The prophet wept for Israel ; wish'd his eyes
Were fountains fed with infinite supplies :
For Israel dealt in robbery and wrong ;
There were the scorner's and the sland'rer's tongue ;
Oaths, us'd as playthings or convenient tools,
As int'rest bias'd knaves, or fashion fools ;
Adult'ry, neighing at his neighbour's door ;
Oppression, lab'ring hard to grind the poor ;
The partial balance, and deceitful weight ;
The treach'rous smile, a mask for secret hate ;
Hypocrisy, formality in pray'r,
And the dull service of the lip, were there.
Her women, insolent and self-caress'd,
By Vanity's unwearied finger dress'd,
Forgot the blush, that virgin fears impart
To modest cheeks, and borrow'd one from art ;
Were just such trifles, without worth or use,
As silly pride and idleness produce ;
Curl'd, scented, furbelow'd, and flounc'd around,
With feet too delicate to touch the ground,
They stretch'd the neck, and roll'd the wanton eye,
And sigh'd for ev'ry fool that flutter'd by.

He saw his people slaves to ev'ry lust,
Lewd, avaricious, arrogant, unjust ;
He heard the wheels of an avenging God
Groan heavily along the distant road ;
Saw Babylon set wide her two-leav'd brass
To let the military deluge pass ;
Jerusalem a prey, her glory soil'd,
Her princes captive, and her treasures spoil'd ;
Wept till all Israel heard his bitter cry,
Stamp'd with his foot, and smote upon his thigh :
But wept, and stamp'd, and smote his thigh in vain ;
Pleasure is deaf when told of future pain,
And sounds prophetic are too rough to suit
Ears long accusom'd to the pleasing lute :
They scorn'd his inspiration and his theme,
Pronounc'd him frantic, and his fears a dream ;
With self-indulgence wing'd the fleeting hours,
Till the foe found them, and down fell the tow'rs.

Long time Assyria bound them in her chain,
Till penitence had purg'd the public stain,
And Cyrus, with relenting pity mov'd,
Return'd them happy to the land they lov'd ;
There, proof against prosperity, a while
They stood the test of her ensnaring smile,
And had the grace in scenes of peace to show
The virtue they had learn'd in scenes of wo.
But man is frail, and can but ill sustain
A long immunity from grief and pain ;
And after all the joys that Plenty leads,
With tiptoe step Vice silently succeeds.

When he that rul'd them with a shepherd's rod
In form a man, in dignity a God,
Came, not expected in that humble guise,
To sift and search them with unerring eyes,
He found, conceal'd beneath a fair outside,
The filth of rottenness, and worm of pride ;
Their piety a system of deceit,
Scripture employ'd to sanctify the cheat ;
The Pharisee the dupe of his own art,
Self-idoliz'd, and yet a knave at heart.

When nations are to perish in their sins,
'Tis in the church the leprosy begins ;
The priest, whose office is with zeal sincere
To watch the fountain, and preserve it clear,
Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the brink,
While others poison what the flock must drink ;
Or, waking at the call of lust alone,
Infuses lies and errors of his own ;
His unsuspecting sheep believe it pure ;
And, tainted by the very means of cure,
Catch from each other a contagious spot,
The foul forerunner of a gen'ral rot.
Then Truth is hush'd, that Heresy may preach ;
And all is trash, that Reason cannot reach :
Then God's own image on the soul impress'd
Becomes a mock'ry, and a standing jest ;
And faith, the root whence only can arise
The graces of a life that wins the skies,

Loses at once all value and esteem,
Pronounc'd by graybeards a pernicious dream :
Then Ceremony leads her bigots forth,
Prepar'd to fight for shadows of no worth ;
While truths, on which eternal things depend,
Find not, or hardly find, a single friend :
As soldiers watch the signal of command,
They learn to bow, to kneel, to sit, to stand ;
Happy to fill religion's vacant place
With hollow form, and gesture, and grimace.

Such, when the Teacher of his church was there,
People and priest, the sons of Israel were ;
Stiff in the letter, lax in the design
And import, of their oracles divine ;
Their learning legendary, false, absurd,
And yet exalted above God's own word ;
They drew a curse from an intended good,
Puff'd up with gifts they never understood.
He judg'd them with as terrible a frown,
As if not love, but wrath, had brought him down
Yet he was gentle as soft summer airs,
Had grace for others' sins, but none for theirs ;
Through all he spoke a noble plainness ran—
Rhet'ric is artifice, the work of man ;
And tricks and turns, that fancy may devise,
Are far too mean for Him that rules the skies.
Th' astonish'd vulgar trembled while he tore
The mask from faces never seen before ;
He stripp'd th' impostors in the noonday sun,
Show'd that they follow'd all they seem'd to shun ;
Their pray'rs made public, their excesses kept
As private as the chambers where they slept ;
The temple and its holy rites profan'd
By mumm'ries, he that dwelt in it disdain'd ;
Uplifted hands, that at convenient times
Could act extortion and the worst of crimes,
Wash'd with a neatness scrupulously nice,
And free from ev'ry taint but that of vice.
Judgment, however tardy, mends her pace
When Obstinacy once has conquer'd Grace.

They saw distemper heal'd, and life restor'd,
In answer to the fiat of his word ;
Confess'd the wonder, and with daring tongue
Blasphem'd th' authority from which it sprung.
They knew by sure prognostics seen on high,
The future tone and temper of the sky ;
But, grave dissemblers ! could not understand
That Sin let loose speaks Punishment at hand.

Ask now of history's authentic page,
And call up evidence from ev'ry age ;
Display with busy and laborious hand
The blessings of the most indebted land ;
What nation will you find, whose annals prove
So rich an int'rest in Almighty love ?
Where dwell they now, where dwelt in ancient day
A people planted, water'd, blest as they ?
Let Egypt's plagues and Canaan's woes proclaim
The favours pour'd upon the Jewish name ;
Their freedom purchas'd for them at the cost
Of all their hard oppressors valued most ;
Their title to a country not their own
Made sure by prodigies till then unknown ;
For them the state they left, made waste and void ;
For them the states to which they went, destroy'd ;
A cloud to measure out their march by day,
By night a fire to cheer the gloomy way ;
That moving signal summoning, when best,
Their host to move, and when it stay'd, to rest.
For them the rocks dissolv'd into a flood,
The dews condens'd into angelic food,
Their very garments sacred, old yet new,
And Time forbid to touch them as he flew ;
Streams, swell'd above the bank, enjoin'd to stand,
While they pass'd through to their appointed land ;
Their leader arm'd with meekness, zeal, and love,
And grac'd with clear credentials from above ;
Themselves secur'd beneath th' Almighty wing !
Their God their captain,* lawgiver, and king ;

* Vide Joshua, v. 14.

Crown'd with a thousand vict'ries, and at last
Lords of the conquer'd soil, there rooted fast.
In peace possessing what they won by war,
Their name far publish'd, and rever'd as far ;
Where will you find a race like theirs, endow'd
With all that man e'er wish'd, or Heav'n bestow'd ?

They, and they only, amongst all mankind,
Receiv'd the transcript of th' eternal mind ;
Were trusted with his own engraven laws,
And constituted guardians of his cause ;
Theirs were the prophets, theirs the priestly call,
And theirs by birth the Saviour of us all.
In vain the nations, that had seen them rise
With fierce and envious yet admiring eyes,
Had sought to crush them, guarded as they were
By pow'r divine, and skill that could not err.
Had they maintain'd allegiance firm and sure,
And kept the faith immaculate and pure,
Then the proud eagles of all-conq'ring Rome
Had found one city not to be o'ercome ;
And the twelve standards of the tribes unfurl'd
Had bid defiance to the warring world.
But grace abus'd brings forth the foulest deeds,
As richest soil the most luxuriant weeds.
Cur'd of the golden calves, their fathers' sin,
They set up self, that idol god, within ;
View'd a Deliv'rer with disdain and hate,
Who left them still a tributary state ;
Seiz'd fast his hand, held out to set them free
From a worse yoke, and nail'd it to the tree :
There was the consummation and the crown,
The flow'r of Israel's infamy full blown ;
Thence date their sad declension and their fall,
Their woes not yet repeal'd, thence date them all.

Thus fell the best instructed in her day,
And the most favour'd land, look where we may.
Philosophy indeed on Grecian eyes
Had pour'd the day, and clear'd the Roman skies ;
In other climes perhaps creative Art,
With pow'r surpassing theirs, perform'd her part,

Might give more life to marble, or might fill
The glowing tablets with a juster skill ;
Might shine in fable, and grace idle themes
With all th' embroid'ry of poetic dreams ;
'Twas theirs alone to dive into the plan
That Truth and Mercy had reveal'd to man ;
And while the World beside, that plan unknown,
Deify'd useless wood, or senseless stone,
They breath'd in faith their well-directed pray'rs,
And the true God, the God of truth, was theirs.

Their glory faded, and their race dispers'd,
The last of nations now, though once the first ;
They warn and teach the proudest, would they learn,
Keep wisdom, or meet vengeance in your turn :
If we escap'd not, if Heav'n spar'd not us,
Peel'd, scatter'd, and exterminated thus ;
If Vice receiv'd her retribution due,
When we were visited, what hope for you ?
When God arises with an awful frown
To punish lust, or pluck presumption down ;
When gifts perverted, or not duly priz'd,
Pleasure o'ervalued, and his grace despis'd,
Provoke the vengeance of his righteous hand
To pour down wrath upon a thankless land ;
He will be found impartially severe,
Too just to wink, or speak the guilty clear.

O Israel, of all nations most undone !
Thy diadem displac'd, thy sceptre gone ;
Thy temple, once thy glory, fall'n and ras'd,
And thou a worshipper e'en where thou mayst ;
Thy services once holy, without spot,
Mere shadows now, their ancient pomp forgot ;
Thy Levites, once a consecrated host,
No longer Levites, and their lineage lost,
And thou thyself o'er ev'ry country sown,
With none on Earth that thou canst call thine own ;
Cry aloud, thou that sittest in the dust,
Cry to the proud, the cruel, and unjust ;
Knock at the gates of nations, rouse their fears ;
Say wrath is coming, and the storm appears ;
But raise the shrillest cry in British ears.

What ails thee, restless as the waves that roar,
And fling their foam against thy chalky shore ?
Mistress, at least while Providence shall please,
And trident-bearing queen of the wide seas—
Why, having kept good faith, and often shown
Friendship and truth to others, find'st thou none ?
Thou that hast set the persecuted free,
None interposes now to succour thee.
Countries indebted to thy pow'r, that shine
With light deriv'd from thee, would smother thine ;
Thy very children watch for thy disgrace—
A lawless brood, and curse thee to thy face.
Thy rulers load thy credit, year by year,
With sums Peruvian mines could never clear ;
As if, like arches built with skilful hand,
The more 'twere press'd the firmer it would stand.

The cry in all thy ships is still the same,
Speed us away to battle and to fame.
Thy mariners explore the wide expanse,
Impatient to descry the flags of France ;
But, though they fight as thine have ever fought,
Return asham'd without the wreaths they sought.
Thy senate is a scene of civil jar,
Chaos of contrarieties at war ;
Where sharp and solid, phlegmatic and light,
Discordant atoms meet, ferment, and fight ;
Where Obstinacy takes his sturdy stand,
To disconcert what Policy has plann'd ;
Where Policy is busied all night long
In setting right what Faction has set wrong ;
Where flails of oratory thrash the floor,
That yields them chaff and dust, and nothing more.
Thy rack'd inhabitants repine, complain,
Tax'd till the brow of Labour sweats in vain ;
War lays a burden on the reeling state,
And peace does nothing to relieve the weight ;
Successive loads succeeding broils impose,
And sighing millions prophesy the close.

Is adverse Providence, when ponder'd well,
So dimly writ, or difficult to spell,

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Thou canst not read with readiness and ease
Providence adverse in events like these ?
Know then that heav'nly wisdom on this ball
Creates, gives birth to, guides, consummates all ;
That, while laborious and quick-thoughted man
Snuffs up the praise of what he seems to plan,
He first conceives, then perfects his design,
As a mere instrument in hands divine :
Blind to the working of that secret pow'r,
That balances the wings of ev'ry hour,
The busy trifler dreams himself alone,
Frames many a purpose, and God works his own.
States thrive or wither as moons wax and wane,
E'en as his will and his decrees ordain ;
While honour, virtue, piety, bear sway,
They flourish ; and as these decline, decay :
In just resentment of his injur'd laws,
He pours contempt on them and on their cause ;
Strikes the rough thread of error right athwart
The web of ev'ry scheme they have at heart ;
Bids rottenness invade and bring to dust
The pillars of support, in which they trust,
And do his errand of disgrace and shame
On the chief strength and glory of the frame.
None ever yet impeded what he wrought,
None bars him out from his most secret thought :
Darkness itself before his eyes is light,
And Hell's close mischief naked in his sight.
Stand now and judge thyself—Hast thou incur'd
His anger, who can waste thee with a word,
Who poises and proportions sea and land,
Weighing them in the hollow of his hand,
And in whose awful sight all nations seem
As grasshoppers, as dust, a drop, a dream ?
Hast thou (a sacrilege his soul abhors)
Claim'd all the glory of thy prosp'rous wars ?
Proud of thy fleets and armies, stol'n the gem
Of his just praise, to lavish it on them ?
Hast thou not learn'd, what thou art often told,
A truth still sacred, and believ'd of old,

That no success attends on spears and swords
 Unblest, and that the battle is the Lord's ?
 That courage is his creature ; and dismay
 The post, that at his bidding speeds away,
 Ghastly in feature, and his stamm'ring tongue
 With doleful rumour and sad presage hung,
 To quell the valour of the stoutest heart,
 And teach the-combatant a woman's part ?
 That he bids thousands fly when none pursue,
 Saves as he will by many or by few,
 And claims for ever, as his royal right,
 Th' event and sure decision of the fight ?

Hast thou, tho' suckled at fair Freedom's breast,
 Exported slav'ry to the conquer'd East ?
 Pull'd down the tyrants India serv'd with dread,
 And rais'd thyself, a greater, in their stead ?
 Gone thither arm'd and hungry, return'd full,
 Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul,
 A despot big with pow'r obtain'd by wealth,
 And that obtain'd by rapine and by stealth ?
 With Asiatic vices stor'd thy mind,
 But left their virtues and thine own behind ?
 And, having truck'd thy soul, brought home the fee,
 To tempt the poor to sell himself to thee ?

Hast thou by statute shov'd from its design
 The Saviour's feast, his own blest bread and wine,
 And made the symbols of atoning grace
 An office-key, a picklock to a place,
 That infidels may prove their title good
 By an oath dipp'd in sacramental blood ?
 A blot that will be still a blot, in spite
 Of all that grave apologists may write ;
 And though a bishop toil to cleanse the stain,
 He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain.
 And hast thou sworn on ev'ry slight pretence,
 Till perjuries are common as bad pence,
 While thousands, careless of the damning sin,
 Kiss the book's outside, who ne'er look within ?

Hast thou, when Heav'n has cloth'd thee with dis-
 And, long provok'd, repaid thee to thy face, [grace,

(For thou hast known eclipses, and endur'd
 Dimness and anguish, all thy beams obscur'd,
 When sin has shed dishonour on thy brow ;
 And never of a sabler hue than now),
 Hast thou, with heart perverse and conscience scar'd,
 Despising all rebuke, still persever'd,
 And having chosen evil, scorn'd the voice
 That cried, Repent !—and gloried in thy choice ?
 Thy fastings, when calamity at last
 Suggests th' expedient of a yearly fast,
 What mean they ? Canst thou dream there is a pow'r
 In lighter diet at a later hour,
 To charm to sleep the threat'nings of the skies,
 And hide past folly from all-seeing eyes ?
 The fast, that wins deliv'rance, and suspends
 The stroke, that a vindictive God intends,
 Is to renounce hypocrisy ; to draw
 Thy life upon the pattern of the law ;
 To war with pleasures idolized before ;
 To vanquish lust, and wear its yoke no more.
 All fasting else, whate'er be the pretence,
 Is wooing mercy by renew'd offence.

Hast thou within the sin, that in old time
 Brought fire from Heav'n, the sex-abusing crime,
 Whose horrid perpetration stamps disgrace,
 Baboons are free from, upon human race ?
 Think on the fruitful and well water'd spot,
 That fed the flocks and herds of wealthy Lot,
 Where Paradise seem'd still vouchsaf'd on earth.
 Burning and scorch'd into perpetual dearth,
 Or, in his words who damn'd the base desire,
 Suff'ring the vengeance of eternal fire :
 Then Nature injur'd, scandaliz'd, defil'd,
 Unveil'd her blushing cheek, look'd on, and smil'd ;
 Beheld with joy the lovely scene defac'd,
 And prais'd the wrath that laid her beauties waste.

Far be the thought from any verse of mine,
 And farther still the form'd and fix'd design,
 To thrust the charge of deeds that I detest
 Against an innocent, unconscious breast :

The man that dares traduce, because he can
 With safety to himself, is not a man :
 An individual is a sacred mark,
 Not to be pierc'd in play, or in the dark ;
 But public censure speaks a public foe,
 Unless a zeal for virtue guide the blow.

The priestly brotherhood, devout, sincere,
 From mean self-int'rest and ambition clear,
 Their hope in heav'n, servility their scorn,
 Prompt to persuade, expostulate, and warn,
 Their wisdom pure, and giv'n them from above,
 Their usefulness ensur'd by zeal and love,
 As meek as the man Moses, and withal
 As bold as in Agrippa's presence Paul,
 Should fly the world's contaminating touch,
 Holy and unpolluted :—are thine such ?
 Except a few with Eli's spirit blest,
 Hophni and Phineas may describe the rest.

Where shall a teacher look, in days like these,
 For ears and hearts, that he can hope to please ?
 Look to the poor—the simple and the plain
 Will hear perhaps thy salutary strain :
 Humility is gentle, apt to learn,
 Speak but the word, will listen and return.
 Alas, not so ! the poorest of the flock
 Are proud, and set their faces as a rock ;
 Denied that earthly opulence they choose,
 God's better gift they scoff at and refuse.
 The rich, the produce of a nobler stem,
 Are more intelligent at least—try them.
 O vain inquiry ! they without remorse
 Are altogether gone a devious course ;
 Wherebeck'ning pleasure leads them, wildly stray ;
 Have burst the bands, and cast the yoke away.

Now borne upon the wings of truth sublime,
 Review thy dim original and prime.
 This island, spot of unreclaim'd rude earth,
 The cradle that receiv'd thee at thy birth,
 Was rock'd by many a rough Norwegian blast,
 And Danish howlings scar'd thee as they pass'd ;

For thou wast born amid the din of arms,
And suck'd a breast that panted with alarms.
While yet thou wast a grov'ling puling chit,
Thy bones not fashion'd, and thy joints not knit,
The Roman taught thy stubborn knee to bow,
Though twice a Cæsar could not bend thee now.
His victory was that of orient light,
When the sun's shafts disperse the gloom of night.
Thy language at this distant moment shows
How much the country to the conqu'ror owes ;
Expressive, energetic, and refin'd,
It sparkles with the gems he left behind :
He brought thy land a blessing when he came,
He found thee savage, and he left thee tame ;
Taught thee to clothe thy pink'd and painted hide,
And grace thy figure with a soldier's pride ;
He sow'd the seeds of order where he went,
Improv'd thee far beyond his own intent,
And, while he rul'd thee by the sword alone,
Made thee at last a warrior like his own.
Religion, if in heav'nly truths attir'd,
Needs only to be seen to be admir'd ;
But thine, as dark as witch'ries of the night,
Was form'd to harden hearts and shock the sight ;
Thy Druids struck the well-strung harps they bore
With fingers deeply dyed in human gore ;
And, while the victim slowly bled to death,
Upon the rolling chords rung out his dying breath.
Who brought the lamp, that with awaking beams
Dispell'd thy gloom, and broke away thy dreams,
Tradition, now decrepit and worn out,
Babbler of ancient fables, leaves a doubt :
But still light reach'd thee ; and those gods of thine,
Woden and Thor, each tott'ring in his shrine,
Fell broken and defac'd at his own door,
As Dagon in Philistia long before.
But Rome, with sorceries and magic wand,
Soon rais'd a cloud that darken'd ev'ry land ;
And thine was smother'd in the stench and fog
Of Tiber's mazes and the papal bog.

Then priests, with bulls and briefs, and shaven crowns,
 And griping fists, and unrelenting frowns,
 Legates and delegates with pow'rs from hell,
 Though heav'nly in pretension, fleec'd thee well :
 And to this hour, to keep it fresh in mind,
 Some twigs of that old scourge are left behind*.
 Thy soldiery, the Pope's well-manag'd pack,
 Were train'd beneath his lash, and knew the smack,
 And, when he laid them on the scent of blood,
 Would hunt a Saracen through fire and flood.
 Lavish of life, to win an empty tomb,
 That prov'd a mint of wealth, a mine to Rome,
 They left their bones beneath unfriendly skies,
 His worthless absolution all the prize.
 Thou wast the veriest slave in days of yore,
 That ever dragg'd a chain or tugg'd an oar ;
 Thy monarchs, arbitrary, fierce, unjust,
 Themselves the slaves of bigotry or lust,
 Disdain'd thy counsels, only in distress
 Found thee a goodly sponge for Pow'r to press.
 Thy chiefs, the lords of many a petty fee,
 Provok'd and harass'd, in return plagu'd thee ;
 Call'd thee away from peaceable employ,
 Domestic happiness and rural joy,
 To waste thy life in arms, or lay it down
 In causeless feuds and bick'ringa of their own.
 Thy parliaments ador'd on bended knees
 The sov'reignty they were conven'd to please ;
 What's'er was ask'd, too timid to resist,
 Complied with, and were graciously dismiss'd ;
 And if some Spartan soul a doubt express'd,
 And, blushing at the tameness of the rest,
 Dar'd to suppose the subject had a choice,
 He was a traitor by the gen'ral voice.
 Oh slave ! with pow'rs thou didst not dare exert,
 Verse cannot stoop so low as thy desert ;
 It shakes the sides of splenetic Disdain,
 Thou self-entitled ruler of the main,

* Which may be found at Doctors' Commons.

To trace thee to the date when yon fair sea,
That clips thy shores, had no such charms for thee;
When other nations flew from coast to coast,
And thou hadst neither fleet nor flag to boast.
Kneel now, and lay thy forehead in the dust;
Blush, if thou canst; not petrified, thou must:
Act but an honest and a faithful part;
Compare what then thou wast with what thou art;
And God's disposing providence confess'd,
Obduracy itself must yield the rest.—
Then thou art bound to serve him, and to prove,
Hour after hour, thy gratitude and love.

Had he not hid thee, and thy favour'd land,
For ages safe beneath his shelt'ring hand,
Giv'n thee his blessing on the clearest proof,
Bid nations leagu'd against thee stand aloof,
And charg'd Hostility and Hate to roar
Where else they would, but not upon thy shore?
His pow'r secur'd thee, when presumptuous Spain
Baptiz'd her fleet invincible in vain;
Her gloomy monarch, doubtful and resign'd
To ev'ry pang that racks an anxious mind,
Ask'd of the waves, that broke upon his coast,
What tidings? and the surge replied—All lost!
And when the Stuart leaning on the Scot,
Then too much fear'd, and now too much forgot,
Pierc'd to the very centre of the realm,
And hop'd to seize his abdicated helm,
'Twas but to prove how quickly with a frown
He that had rais'd thee could have pluck'd thee down.
Peculiar is the grace by thee possess'd,
Thy foes implacable, thy land at rest;
Thy thunders travel over earth and seas,
And all at home is pleasure, wealth, and ease.
'Tis thus, extending his tempestuous arm,
Thy Maker fills the nations with alarm,
While his own Heav'n surveys the troubled scene,
And feels no change, unshaken and serene.
Freedom, in other lands scarce known to shine,
Pours out a flood of splendour upon thine;

Thou hast as bright an int'rest in her rays
As ever Roman had in Rome's best days.
True freedom is where no restraint is known,
That Scripture, justice, and good sense disown,
Where only vice and injury are tied,
And all from shore to shore is free beside.
Such freedom is—and Windsor's hoary tow'rs
Stood trembling at the boldness of thy pow'rs,
That won a nymph on that immortal plain
Like her the fabled Phœbus woo'd in vain :
He found the laurel only—happier you
Th' unfading laurel, and the virgin too !*

Now think, if Pleasure have a thought to spare ;
If God himself be not beneath her care ;
If Business, constant as the wheels of time,
Can pause one hour to read a serious rhyme ;
If the new mail thy merchants now receive,
Or expectation of the next, give leave ;
Oh think ! if chargeable with deep arrears
For such indulgence gilding all thy years,
How much, though long neglected, shining yet,
The beams of heav'nly truth have swell'd the debt.
When persecuting zeal made royal sport
With tortur'd innocence in Mary's court,
And Bonner, blythe as shepherd at a wake,
Enjoy'd the show, and danc'd about the stake ;
The sacred Book, its value understood,
Receiv'd the seal of martyrdom in blood.
Those holy men, so full of truth and grace,
Seem to reflection of a diff'rent race ;
Meek, modest, venerable, wise, sincere,
In such a cause they could not dare to fear ;
They could not purchase earth with such a prize,
Nor spare a life too short to reach the skies.
From them to thee convey'd along the tide,
Their streaming hearts pour'd freely when they died
Those truths, which neither use nor years impair,
Invite thee, woo thee, to the bliss they share.

* Alluding to the grant of Magna Charta, which was extorted from King John by the barons at Runnymede near Windsor.

What dotage will not vanity maintain ?
 What web too weak to catch a modern brain ?
 The moles and bats in full assembly find,
 On special search, the keen-ey'd eagle blind.
 And did they dream, and art thou wiser now ?
 Prove it—if better, I submit and bow.
 Wisdom and goodness are twin-born, one heart
 Must hold both sisters, never seen apart.
 So then—as darkness overspread the deep,
 Ere Nature rose from her eternal sleep,
 And this delightful earth, and that fair sky,
 Leap'd out of nothing, call'd by the Most High ;
 By such a change thy darkness is made light,
 Thy chaos order, and thy weakness might ;
 And He, whose pow'r mere nullity obeys,
 Who found thee nothing, form'd thee for his praise.
 To praise him is to serve him, and fulfil,
 Doing and suff'ring, his unquestion'd will ;
 'Tis to believe what men inspir'd of old,
 Faithful, and faithfully inform'd, unfold ;
 Candid and just, with no false aim in view,
 To take for truth what cannot but be true ;
 To learn in God's own school the Christian part,
 And bind the task assign'd thee to thine heart.
 Happy the man there seeking and there found,
 Happy the nation where such men abound.

How shall a verse impress thee ? by what name
 Shall I adjure thee not to court thy shame ?
 By theirs, whose bright example unimpeach'd
 Directs thee to that eminence they reach'd,
 Heroes and worthies of days past, thy sires ?
 Or his, who touch'd their hearts with hallow'd fires ?
 Their names, alas ! in vain reproach an age,
 Whom all the vanities they scorn'd engage !
 And His, that seraphs tremble at, is hung
 Disgracefully on ev'ry trifler's tongue,
 Or serves the champion in forensic war
 To flourish and parade with at the bar.
 Pleasure herself perhaps suggests a plea,
 If int'rest move thee, to persuade e'en thee ;

By ev'ry charm that smiles upon her face,
By joys possess'd, and joys still held in chase,
If dear society be worth a thought,
And if the feast of freedom cloy thee not,
Reflect that these, and all that seems thine own,
Held by the tenure of his will alone,
Like angels in the service of their Lord,
Remain with thee, or leave thee at his word ;
That gratitude and temp'rance in our use
Of what he gives, unsparing and profuse,
Secure the favour, and enhance the joy,
That thankless waste and wild abuse destroy.
But above all reflect, how cheap soc'er
Those rights, that millions envy thee, appear,
And, though resolv'd to risk them, and swim down
The tide of Pleasure, heedless of His frown,
That blessings truly sacred, and when giv'n
Mark'd with the signature and stamp of Heav'n,
The word of prophecy, those truths divine,
Which make that Heav'n, if thou desire it, thine,
(Awful alternative ! believ'd, belov'd,
Thy glory, and thy shame if unimprov'd,)
Are never long vouchsaf'd, if push'd aside
With cold disgust or philosophic pride !
And that judicially withdrawn, disgrace,
Error, and darkness, occupy their place.

A world is up in arms, and thou, a spot
Not quickly found, if negligently sought,
Thy soul as ample as thy bounds are small,
Endur'st the brunt, and dar'st defy them all :
And wilt thou join to this bold enterprise
A bolder still, a contest with the skies ?
Remember, if He guard thee and secure,
Whoe'er assails thee, thy success is sure ;
But if He leave thee, though the skill and pow'r
Of nations sworn to spoil thee and devour,
Were all collected in thy single arm,
And thou couldst laugh away the fear of harm,
That strength would fail, oppos'd against the push
And feeble onset of a pigmy rush.

Say not (and if the thought of such defence
Should spring within thy bosom, drive it thence)
What nation amongst all my foes is free
From crimes as base as any charg'd on me ?
Their measure fill'd, they too shall pay the debt,
Which God, though long forborne, will not forget.
But know that Wrath divine, when most severe,
Makes Justice still the guide of his career,
And will not punish, in one mingled crowd,
Them without light, and thee without a cloud.

Muse, hang this harp upon yon aged beech,
Still murm'ring with the solemn truths I teach ;
And while at intervals a cold blast sings
Through the dry leaves, and pants upon the strings ;
My soul shall sigh in secret, and lament
A nation scourg'd, yet tardy to repent.
I know the warning song is sung in vain ;
That few will hear, and fewer heed the strain ;
But if a sweeter voice, and one design'd
A blessing to my country and mankind,
Reclaim the wand'ring thousands, and bring home
A flock so scatter'd and so wont to roam,
Then place it once again between my knees ;
The sound of truth will then be sure to please :
And truth alone, where'er my life be cast,
In scenes of plenty, or the pining waste,
Shall be my chosen theme, my glory to the last.

HOPE.

..... doceas iter, et sacra otia pandas.
Virg. *Æn.* vi. 109.

Ask what is human life—the sage replies,
 With disappointment low'ring in his eyes,
 A painful passage o'er a restless flood,
 A vain pursuit of fugitive false good,
 A scene of fancied bliss and heart-felt care,
 Closing at last in darkness and despair,
 The poor, inur'd to drudg'ry and distress,
 Act without aim, think little, and feel less,
 And no where, but in feign'd Arcadian scenes,
 Taste happiness, or know what pleasure means.
 Riches are pass'd away from hand to hand,
 As fortune, vice, or folly, may command ;
 As in a dance the pair that take the lead
 Turn downward, and the lowest pair succeed,
 So shifting and so various is the plan,
 By which Heav'n rules the mix'd affairs of man ;
 Vicissitude wheels round the motley crowd,
 The rich grow poor, the poor become purse-proud ;
 Bus'ness is labour, and man's weakness such,
 Pleasure is labour too, and tires as much,
 The very sense of it foregoes its use,
 By repetition pall'd, by age obtuse.
 Youth lost in dissipation we deplore,
 Through life's sad remnant, what no sighs restore ;
 Our years, a fruitless race without a prize,
 Too many, yet too few to make us wise.
 Dangling his cane about, and taking snuff,
 Lothario cries, What philosophic stuff—
 O querulous and weak !—whose useless brain
 Once thought of nothing, and now thinks in vain ;
 Whose eye reverted weeps o'er all the past,
 Whose prospect shows thee a disheart'ning waste ;

P

Would age in thee resign his wintry reign,
And youth invigorate that frame again,
Renew'd desire would grace with other speech
Joys always priz'd, when plac'd within our reach.

For lift thy palsied head, shake off the gloom
That overhangs the borders of thy tomb,
See Nature gay, as when she first began
With smiles alluring her admirer, man ;
She spreads the morning over eastern hills,
Earth glitters with the drops the night distils ;
The Sun obedient at her call appears,
To fling his glories o'er the robe she wears ;
Banks cloth'd with flow'rs, groves fill'd with sprightly sounds,

The yellow tilth, green meads, rocks, rising grounds,
Streams edg'd with osiers, fatt'ning ev'ry field,
Where'er they flow, now seen and now conceal'd ;
From the blue rim, where skies and mountains meet,
Down to the very turf beneath thy feet,
Ten thousand charms, that only fools despise,
Or Pride can look at with indiff'rent eyes,
All speak one language, all with one sweet voice
Cry to her universal realm, Rejoice !
Man feels the spur of passions and desires,
And she gives largely more than he requires ;
Not that his hours devoted all to Care,
Hollow-ey'd Abstinence, and lean Despair,
The wretch may pine, while to his snell, taste, sight,
She holds a paradise of rich delight ;
But gently to rebuke his awkward fear,
To prove that what she gives, she gives sincere ;
To banish hesitation, and proclaim
His happiness, her dear, her only aim.
'Tis grave philosophy's absurdest dream,
That Heav'n's intentions are not what they seem.
That only shadows are dispens'd below,
And Earth has no reality but wo.

Thus things terrestrial wear a diff'rent hue,
As youth or age persuades ; and neither true.

So Flora's wreath through colour'd crystal seen,
The rose or lily appears blue or green,
But still th' imputed tints are those alone
The medium represents, and not their own.

To rise at noon, sit slipshod and undress'd,
To read the news, or fiddle, as seems best,
Till half the world comes rattling at his door,
To fill the dull vacuity till four ;
And, just when ev'ning turns the blue vault gray,
To spend two hours in dressing for the day ;
To make the sun a bauble without use,
Save for the fruits his heav'nly beams produce ;
Quite to forget, or deem it worth no thought,
Who bids him shine, or if he shine or not ;
Through mere necessity to close his eyes
Just when the larks and when the shepherds rise ;
Is such a life, so tediously the same,
So void of all utility or aim,
That poor *Jouquil*, with almost ev'ry breath
Sighs for his exit, vulgarly call'd death :
For he, with all his follies, has a mind
Not yet so blank, or fashionably blind,
But now and then perhaps a feeble ray
Of distant wisdom shoots across his way,
By which he reads, that life without a plan,
As useless as the moment it began,
Serves merely as a soil for discontent
To thrive in ; an encumbrance ere half spent.
Oh weariness beyond what asses feel,
That tread the circuit of the cistern wheel ;
A dull rotation, never at a stay,
Yesterday's face twin-image of to-day ;
While conversation, an exhausted stock,
Grows drowsy as the clicking of a clock.
No need, he cries, of gravity stuff'd out
With academic dignity devout,
To read wise lectures, vanity the text :
Proclaim the remedy, ye learned, next ;
For truth self-evident, with pomp impress'd,
Is vanity surpassing all the rest.

That remedy, not hid in deeps profound,
Yet seldom sought where only to be found,
While passion turns aside from its due scope
Th' inquirer's aim, that remedy is hope.
Life is His gift, from whom whate'er life needs,
And ev'ry good and perfect gift, proceeds ;
Bestow'd on man, like all that we partake,
Royally, freely, for his bounty's sake ;
Transient indeed, as is the fleeting hour,
And yet the seed of an immortal flow'r ;
Design'd in honour of his endless love,
To fill with fragrance his abode above ;
No trifle, howsoever short it seem,
And, howsoever shadowy, no dream ;
Its value, what no thought can ascertain,
Nor all an angel's eloquence explain ;
Men deal with life as children with their play
Who first misuse, then cast their toys away ;
Live to no sober purpose, and contend
That their Creator had no serious end.
When God and man stand opposite in view,
Man's disappointment must of course ensue.
The just Creator condescends to write,
In beams of inextinguishable light,
His names of wisdom, goodness, pow'r, and love,
On all that blooms below, or shines above ;
To catch the wand'ring notice of mankind,
And teach the world, if not perversely blind,
His gracious attributes, and prove the share
His offspring hold in his paternal care.
If, led from earthly things to things divine,
His creature thwart not his august design,
Then praise is heard instead of reasoning pride,
And captious cavil and complaint subside.
Nature, employ'd in her allotted place,
Is hand-maid to the purposes of Grace ;
By good vouchsaf'd makes known superior good,
And bliss not seen by blessings understood :
That bliss, reveal'd in Scripture, with a glow
Bright as the covenant-ensuring bow .

Fires all his feelings with a noble scorn
Of sensual evil, and thus Hope is born.

Hope sets the stamp of vanity on all
That men have deem'd substantial since the fall,
Yet has the wondrous virtue to educe
From emptiness itself a real use ;
And while she takes, as at a father's hand,
What health and sober appetite demand,
From fading good derives, with chymic art,
That lasting happiness, a thankful heart.
Hope, with uplifted foot, set free from earth,
Pants for the place of her ethereal birth,
On steady wings sails through th' immense abyss,
Plucks amaranthine joys from bow'rs of bliss,
And crowns the soul, while yet a mourner here,
With wreaths like those triumphant spirits wear.
Hope, as an anchor firm and sure, holds fast
The Christian vessel, and defies the blast.
Hope ! nothing else can nourish and secure
His new-born virtues, and preserve him pure.
Hope ! let the wretch, once conscious of the joy,
Whom now despairing agonies destroy,
Speak, for he can, and none so well as he,
What treasures centre, what delights in thee.
Had he the gems, the spices, and the land
That boasts the treasure, all at his command ;
The fragrant grove, th' inestimable mine,
Were light, when weigh'd against one smile of thine.

Though clasp'd and cradled in his nurse's arms,
He shine with all a cherub's artless charms,
Man is the genuine offspring of revolt,
Stubborn and sturdy, a wild ass's colt ;
His passions, like the wat'ry stores that sleep
Beneath the smiling surface of the deep,
Wait but the lashes of a wintry storm,
To frown and roar, and shake his feeble form.
From infancy through childhood's giddy maze,
Froward at school, and fretful in his plays,
The puny tyrant burns to subjugate
The free republic of the whip-gig state.

If one, his equal in athletic frame,
 Or, more provoking still, of nobler name,
 Dare step across his arbitrary views,
 An Iliad, only not in verse, ensues :
 The little Greeks look trembling at the scales,
 Till the best tongue, or heaviest hand, prevails.

Now see him launch'd into the world at large ;
 If priest, supinely droning o'er his charge,
 Their fleece his pillow, and his weekly drawl,
 Though short, too long, the price he pays for all.
 If lawyer, loud, whatever cause he plead,
 But proudest of the worst, if that succeed.
 Perhaps a grave physician, gath'ring fees,
 Punctually paid for length'ning out disease ;
 No COTTON, whose humanity sheds rays,
 That make superior skill his second praise.
 If arms engage him, he devotes to sport
 His date of life, so likely to be short ;
 A soldier may be any thing, if brave,
 So may a tradesman, if not quite a knave.
 Such stuff the world is made of ; and mankind
 To passion, int'rest, pleasure, whim resign'd,
 Insist on, as if each were his own pope,
 Forgiveness, and the privilege of hope.
 But Conscience, in some awful silent hour,
 When captivating lusts have lost their pow'r,
 Perhaps when sickness, or some fearful dream,
 Reminds him of religion, hated theme !
 Starts from the down, on which she lately slept,
 And tells of laws despis'd, at least not kept :
 Shows with a pointing finger, and no noise,
 A pale procession of past sinful joys,
 All witnesses of blessings foully scorn'd,
 And life abus'd, and not to be suborn'd.
 Mark these, she says ; these summon'd from afar,
 Begin their march to meet thee at the bar ;
 There find a Judge inexorably just,
 And perish there, as all presumption must.

Peace be to those (such peace as Earth can give)
 Who live in pleasure, dead e'en while they live ;

Born capable indeed of heav'nly truth ;
 But down to latest age, from earliest youth,
 Their mind a wilderness through want of care,
 The plough of wisdom never ent'ring there.
 Peace (if insensibility may claim
 A right to the meek honours of her name)
 To men of pedigree, their noble race,
 Emulous always of the nearest place
 To any throne, except the throne of Grace.
 Let cottagers and unenlighten'd swains
 Revere the laws they dream that Heav'n ordains ;
 Resort on Sundays to the house of pray'r,
 And ask, and fancy they find, blessings there.
 Themselves, perhaps, when weary they retreat
 T' enjoy cool nature in a country seat,
 T' exchange the centre of a thousand trades,
 For clumps, and lawns, and temples, and cascades,
 May now and then their velvet cushions take,
 And seem to pray for good example's sake ;
 Judging, in charity no doubt, the town
 Pious enough, and having need of none.
 Kind souls ! to teach their tenantry to prize
 What they themselves, without remorse, despise :
 Nor hope have they, nor fear, of aught to come,
 As well for them had prophecy been dumb ;
 They could have held the conduct they pursue,
 Had Paul of Tarsus liv'd and died a Jew ;
 And truth, propos'd to reas'ners wise as they,
 Is a pearl cast—completely cast away.

They die—Death lends them, pleas'd, and as in sport,
 All the grim honours of his ghastly court.
 Far other paintings grace the chamber now,
 Where late we saw the mimic landscape glow :
 The busy heralds hang the sable scene
 With mournful 'scutcheons, and dim lamps between ;
 Proclaim their titles to the crowd around,
 But they that wore them move not at the sound ;
 The coronet, plac'd idly at their head,
 Adds nothing now to the degraded dead ;

And e'en the star, that glitters on the bier,
 Can only say—Nobility lies here.
 Peace to all such—'twere pity to offend,
 By useless censure, whom we cannot mend ;
 Life without hope can close but in despair, [there.
 'Twas there we found them, and must leave them

As, when two pilgrims in a forest stray,
 Both may be lost, yet each in his own way ;
 So fares it with the multitudes beguil'd
 In vain Opinion's waste and dang'rous wild ;
 Ten thousand rove the brakes and thorns among,
 Some eastward, and some westward, and all wrong.
 But here, alas ! the fatal diff'rence lies,
 Each man's belief is right in his own eyes ;
 And he that blames what they have blindly chose
 Incurs resentment for the love he shows.

Say, botanist, within whose province fall
 The cedar and the hyssop on the wall,
 Of all that deck the lanes, the fields, the bow'rs,
 What parts the kindred tribes of weeds and flow'rs ?
 Sweet scent, or lovely form, or both combin'd,
 Distinguish ev'ry cultivated kind ;
 The want of both denotes a meaner breed,
 And Chloe from her garland picks the weed.
 Thus hopes of ev'ry sort, whatever sect
 Esteem them, sow them, rear them, and protect,
 If wild in nature, and not duly found,
 Gethsemane ! in thy dear hallow'd ground,
 That cannot bear the blaze of Scripture light,
 Nor cheer the spirit, nor refresh the sight,
 Nor animate the soul to Christian deeds,
 (Oh cast them from thee !) are weeds, arrant weeds.

Ethelred's house, the centre of six ways,
 Diverging each from each, like equal rays,
 Himself as bountiful as April rains,
 Lord paramount of the surrounding plains,
 Would give relief of bed and board to none
 But guests that sought it in th' appointed *One* ;
 And they might enter at his open door,
 E'en till his spacious hall would hold no more.

He sent a servant forth by ev'ry road,
To sound his horn, and publish it abroad,
That all might mark—knight, menial, high, and low,
An ord'nance it concern'd them much to know.
If, after all, some headstrong hardy lout
Would disobey, though sure to be shut out,
Could he with reason murmur at his case,
Himself sole author of his own disgrace?
No! the decree was just and without flaw;
And he, that made, had right to make, the law;
His sov'reign pow'r and pleasure unrestrain'd,
The wrong was his who wrongfully complain'd.

Yet half mankind maintain a churlish strife
With Him, the Donor of eternal life,
Because the deed, by which his love confirms
The largess he bestows, prescribes the terms.
Compliance with his will your lot ensures,
Accept it only, and the boon is yours.
And sure it is as kind to smile and give,
As with a frown to say, Do this and live.
Love is not pedlar's trump'ry bought and sold:
He *will* give freely, or he *will* withhold;
His soul abhors a mercenary thought,
And him as deeply who abhors it not;
He stipulates indeed, but merely this,
That man will freely take an unbought bliss,
Will trust him for a faithful gen'rous part,
Nor set a price upon a willing heart.
Of all the ways that seem to promise fair,
To place you where his saints his presence share,
This only can; for this plain cause, express'd
In terms as plain, Himself has shut the rest.
But oh the strife, the bick'ring, and debate,
The tidings of unpurchas'd Heav'n create!
The flirtd fan, the bridle, and the toss,
All speakers, yet all language at a loss.
From stucco'd walls smart arguments rebound
And beaus, adept in ev'ry thing profound,
Die of disdain, or whistle off the sound.

Such is the clamour of rooks, daws, and kites,
 Th' explosion of the levell'd tube excites,
 Where mould'ring abbey-walls o'erhang the glade,
 And oaks coeval spread a mournful shade ;
 The screaming nations, hov'ring in mid air,
 Loudly resent the stranger's freedom there,
 And seem to warn him never to repeat
 His bold intrusion on their dark retreat.

Adieu, Vinosà cries, ere yet he sips
 The purple bumper trembling at his lips,
 Adieu to all morality ! if Grace
 Make works a vain ingredient in the case.
 The Christian hope is—Waiter, draw the cork—
 If I mistake not—Blockhead ! with a fork !
 Without good works, whatever some may boast,
 Mere folly and delusion—Sir, your toast.
 My firm persuasion is, at least sometimes,
 That Heav'n will weigh man's virtues and his crimes
 With nice attention, in a righteous scale,
 And save or damn as these or those prevail.
 I plant my foot upon this ground of trust,
 And silence ev'ry fear with—God is just.
 But if perchance on some dull drizzling day
 A thought intrude, that says, or seems to say,
 If thus th' important cause is to be tried,
 Suppose the beam should dip on the wrong side ;
 I soon recover from these needless frights,
 And God is merciful—sets all to rights.
 Thus between justice, as my prime support,
 And mercy, fled to as the last resort,
 I glide and steal along with Heav'n in view,
 And,—pardon me, the bottle stands with you.

I never will believe, the Col'nel cries,
 The sanguinary schemes that some devise,
 Who make the good Creator on their plan
 A being of less equity than man.
 If appetite, or what divines call lust,
 Which men comply with, e'en because they must,
 Be punish'd with perdition, who is pure ?
 Then theirs, no doubt, as well as mine, is sure.

If sentence of eternal pain belong
To ev'ry sudden slip and transient wrong,
Then Heav'n enjoins the fallible and frail
A hopeless task, and damns them if they fail.
My creed (whatever some creed-makers mean
By Athanasian nonsense, or Nicene)—
My creed is, he is safe that does his best,
And death's a doom sufficient for the rest.

Right, says an ensign ; and, for aught I see,
Your faith and mine substantially agree ;
The best of ev'ry man's performance here
Is to discharge the duties of his sphere.
A lawyer's dealings should be just and fair,
Honesty shines with great advantage there.
Fasting and pray'r sit well upon a priest,
A decent caution and reserve at least.
A soldier's best is courage in the field,
With nothing here that wants to be conceal'd.
Manly deportment, gallant, easy, gay ;
A hand as lib'ral as the light of day.
The soldier thus endow'd, who never shrinks,
Nor closets up his thoughts, whate'er he thinks,
Who scorns to do an injury by stealth,
Must go to Heav'n—and I must drink his health.
Sir Smug, he cries (for lowest at the board,
Just made fifth chaplain of his patron lord,
His shoulders witnessing, by many a shrug,
How much his feelings suffer'd, sat Sir Smug),
Your office is to winnow false from true ;
Come, prophet, drink, and tell us what think you ?
Sighing and smiling as he takes his glass,
Which they that woo preferment rarely pass,
Fallible man, the church-bred youth replies,
Is still found fallible, however wise ;
And diff'ring judgments serve but to declare,
That truth lies somewhere, if we knew but where.
Of all it ever was my lot to read,
Of critics now alive, or long since dead,
The book of all the world that charm'd me most
Was,—welladay, the titlepage was lost ;

The writer well remarks, a heart that knows
 To take with gratitude what Heav'n bestows,
 With prudence always ready at our call,
 To guide our use of it, is all in all.
 Doubtless it is.—To which, of my own store,
 I superadd a few essentials more ;
 But these, excuse the liberty I take,
 I wave just now, for conversation's sake.—
 Spoke like an oracle, they all exclaim,
 And add Right Rev'rend to Smug's honour'd name.

And yet our lot is giv'n us in a land
 Where busy arts are never at a stand ;
 Where Science points her telescopic eye,
 Familiar with the wonders of the sky ;
 Where bold Inquiry, diving out of sight,
 Brings many a precious pearl of truth to light ;
 Where nought eludes the persevering quest
 That fashion, taste, or luxury, suggest.

But, above all, in her own light array'd,
 See Mercy's grand apocalypse display'd !
 The sacred book no longer suffers wrong,
 Bound in the fetters of an unknown tongue ;
 But speaks with plainness, art could never mend,
 What simplest minds can soonest comprehend.
 God gives the word, the preachers throng around,
 Live from his lips, and spread the glorious sound ;
 That sound bespeaks Salvation on her way,
 The trumpet of a life-restoring day ;
 'Tis heard where England's eastern glory shines,
 And in the gulfs of her Cornubian mines.
 And still it spreads. See Germany send forth
 Her sons* to pour it on the farthest north :
 Fir'd with a zeal peculiar, *they* defy
 The rage and rigour of a polar sky,
 And plant successfully sweet Sharon's rose
 On icy plains, and in eternal snows.

O blest within th' enclosure of your rocks,
 Nor herds have ye to boast, nor bleating flocks ;

* The Moravian Missionaries in Greenland. See Krantz.

No fertilizing streams your fields divide,
 That show revers'd the villas on their side;
 No groves have ye; no cheerful sound of bird,
 Or voice of turtle, in your land is heard;
 Nor grateful eglantine regales the smell
 Of those, that walk at ev'ning where ye dwell:
 But Winter, arm'd with terrors here unknown,
 Sits absolute on his unshaken throne;
 Piles up his stores amidst the frozen waste,
 And bids the mountains he has built stand fast;
 Beckons the legions of his storms away
 From happier scenes, to make your land a prey;
 Proclaims the soil a conquest he has won,
 And scorns to share it with the distant sun.
 Yet Truth is yours, remote, unenvied isle!
 And Peace, the genuine offspring of her smile;
 The pride of letter'd Ignorance, that binds
 In chains of error our accomplish'd minds,
 That decks, with all the splendour of the true,
 A false religion, is unknown to you.
 Nature, indeed, vouchsafes for our delight
 The sweet vicissitudes of day and night;
 Soft airs and genial moisture feed and cheer
 Field, fruit, and flow'r, and ev'ry creature here;
 But brighter beams than his who fires the skies,
 Have ris'n at length on your admiring eyes,
 That shoot into your darkest caves the day,
 From which our nicer optics turn away.

Here see th' encouragement Grace gives to vice,
 The dire effect of mercy without price!
 What were they? what some fools are made by art,
 They were by nature, atheists, head and heart.
 The gross idolatry blind heathens teach
 Was too refin'd for them, beyond their reach.
 Not e'en the glorious Sun, though men revere
 The monarch most, that seldom will appear,
 And tho' his beams, that quicken where they shine,
 May claim some right to be esteem'd divine,
 Not e'en the sun, desirable as rare,
 Could bend one knee, engage one vot'ry there;

They were, what base Credulity believes
 True Christians are, dissemblers, drunkards, thieves.
 The full-gorg'd savage, at his nauseous feast,
 Spent half the darkness, and snor'd out the rest,
 Was one, whom Justice, on an equal plan,
 Denouncing death upon the sins of man,
 Might almost have indulg'd with an escape,
 Chargeable only with a human shape.

What are they now?—Morality may spare
 Her grave concern, her kind suspicions there :
 The wretch, who once sang wildly, danc'd, and laugh'd,
 And suck'd in dizzy madness with his draught,
 Has wept a silent flood, revers'd his ways,
 Is sober, meek, benevolent, and prays,
 Feeds sparingly, communicates his store,
 Abhors the craft he boasted of before,
 And he that stole, has learn'd to steal no more.
 Well spake the prophet, Let the desert sing,
 Where sprang the thorn, the spiry fir shall spring,
 And where unsightly and rank thistles grew,
 Shall grow the myrtle and luxuriant yew.

Go now, and with important tone demand
 On what foundation virtue is to stand,
 If self-exalting claims be turn'd adrift,
 And grace be grace indeed, and life a gift ;
 The poor reclaim'd inhabitant, his eyes
 Glist'ning at once with pity and surprise,
 Amaz'd that shadows should obscure the sight
 Of one, whose birth was in a land of light,
 Shall answer, Hope, sweet Hope, has set me free,
 And made all pleasures else mere dross to me.

These, amidst scenes as waste as if denied
 The common care that waits on all beside,
 Wild as if Nature there, void of all good,
 Play'd only gambols in a frantic mood
 (Yet charge not heav'nly skill with having plann'd
 A plaything world, unworthy of his hand),
 Can see his love, though secret evil lurks
 In all we touch, stamp'd plainly on his works,

Deem life a blessing with its num'rous woes,
 Nor spurn away a gift a God bestows.
 Hard task, indeed, o'er arctic seas to roam !
 Is hope exotic ? grows it not at home ?
 Yes, but an object, bright as orient morn,
 May press the eye too closely to be borne ;
 A distant virtue we can all confess,
 It hurts our pride, and moves our envy, less.

Leuconomus (beneath well-sounding Greek
 I slur a name a poet must not speak)
 Stood pilloried on Infamy's high stage,
 And bore the pelting scorn of half an age ;
 The very butt of Slander, and the blot
 For ev'ry dart that Malice ever shot.
 The man that mention'd *him* at once dismiss'd
 All mercy from his lips, and sneer'd and hiss'd ;
 His crimes were such as Sodom never knew,
 And Perjury stood up to swear all true ;
 His aim was mischief, and his zeal pretence,
 His speech rebellion against common sense ;
 A knave, when tried on honesty's plain rule ;
 And when by that of reason, a mere fool ;
 The World's best comfort was, his doom was pass'd,
 Die when he might, he must be damn'd at last.

Now, Truth, perform thine office ; waft aside
 The curtain drawn by Prejudice and Pride,
 Reveal (the man is dead) to wond'ring eyes
 This more than monster, in his proper guise.
 He lov'd the World that hated him : the tear
 That dropp'd upon his Bible was sincere ;
 Assail'd by scandal and the tongue of strife,
 His only answer was a blameless life ;
 And he that forg'd, and he that threw the dart,
 Had each a brother's int'rest in his heart.
 Paul's love of Christ, and steadiness unbrib'd,
 Were copied close in him, and well transcrib'd.
 He follow'd Paul ; his zeal a kindred flame,
 His apostolic charity the same.
 Like him, cross'd cheerfully tempestuous seas,
 Forsaking country, kindred, friends, and ease ;

Like him he labour'd, and like him content
To bear it, suffer'd shame where'er he went.
Blush, Calumny ! and write upon his tomb,
If honest Eulogy can spare thee room,
Thy deep repentance of thy thousand lies,
Which, aim'd at him, have pierc'd th' offended skies !
And say, Blot out my sin, confess'd, deplor'd,
Against thine image, in thy saint, O Lord !

No blinder bigot, I maintain it still,
Than he who must have pleasure, come what will :
He laughs, whatever weapon Truth may draw,
And deems her sharp artillery mere straw.
Scripture indeed is plain ; but God and he
On Scripture ground are sure to disagree ;
Some wiser rule must teach him how to live,
Than that his Maker has seen fit to give ;
Supple and flexible as Indian cane,
To take the bend his appetites ordain ;
Contriv'd to suit frail Nature's crazy case,
And reconcile his lusts with saving grace.
By this, with nice precision of design,
He draws upon life's map a zigzag line,
That shows how far 'tis safe to follow sin,
And where his danger and God's wrath begin.
By this he forms, as pleas'd he sports along,
His well-pois'd estimate of right and wrong ;
And finds the modish manners of the day,
Though loose, as harmless as an infant's play.

Build by whatever plan Caprice decrees,
With what materials, on what ground you please ;
Your hope shall stand unblam'd, perhaps admir'd,
If not that hope the Scripture has requir'd.
The strange conceits, vain projects, and wild dreams,
With which hypocrisy for ever teems
(Though other follies strike the public eye,
And raise a laugh), pass unmolested by ;
But if, unblameable in word and thought,
A *man* arise, a man whom God has taught,
With all Elijah's dignity of tone,
And all the love of the beloved John,

To storm the citadels they build in air,
 And smite th' untemper'd wall ; 'tis death to spare.
 To sweep away all refuges of lies,
 And place, instead of quirks themselves devise,
Lama Sabachthani before their eyes ;
 To prove, that without Christ all gain is loss,
 All hope despair, that stands not on his cross ;
 Except the few his God may have impress'd,
 A tenfold frenzy seizes all the rest.

Throughout mankind, the Christian kind at least,
 There dwells a consciousness in ev'ry breast,
 That folly ends where genuine hope begins,
 And he that finds his Heav'n must lose his sins.
 Nature opposes with her utmost force
 This riving stroke, this ultimate divorce ;
 And, while religion seems to be her view,
 Hates with a deep sincerity *the true* :
 For this, of all that ever influenc'd man,
 Since Abel worshipp'd, or the world began,
 This only spares no lust, admits no plea,
 But makes him, if at all, completely free ;
 Sounds forth the signal, as she mounts her car,
 Of an eternal, universal war ;
 Rejects all treaty, penetrates all wiles,
 Scorns with the same indiff'rence frowns and smiles ;
 Drives through the realms of Sin, where Riot reels,
 And grinds his crown beneath her burning wheels !
 Hence all that is in man, pride, passion, art,
 Pow'rs of the mind, and feelings of the heart,
 Insensible of Truth's almighty charms,
 Starts at her first approach, and sounds to arms !
 While Bigotry, with well-dissembled fears,
 His eyes shut fast, his fingers in his ears,
 Mighty to parry and push by God's word,
 With senseless noise, his argument the sword,
 Pretends a zeal for godliness and grace,
 And spits abhorrence in the Christian's face.

Parent of Hope, immortal Truth ! make known
 Thy deathless wreaths, and triumphs all thine own :

The silent progress of thy pow'r is such,
Thy means so feeble, and despis'd so much,
That few believe the wonders thou hast wrought,
And none can teach them, but whom thou hast taught.
O see me sworn to serve thee, and command
A painter's skill into a poet's hand,
That, while I trembling trace a work divine,
Fancy may stand aloof from the design,
And light, and shade, and ev'ry stroke, be thine.

If ever thou hast felt another's pain,
If ever when he sigh'd hast sigh'd again,
If ever on thine eyelid stood the tear,
That pity had engender'd, drop one here.
This man was happy—had the World's good word,
And with it ev'ry joy it can afford ;
Friendship and love seem'd tenderly at strife,
Which most should sweeten his untroubled life ;
Politely learn'd, and of a gentle race,
Good breeding and good sense gave all a grace,
And whether at the toilette of the fair,
He laugh'd and trifled, made him welcome there,
Or if in masculine debate he shar'd,
Ensur'd him mute attention and regard.
Alas how chang'd ! Expressive of his mind,
His eyes are sunk, arms folded, head reclin'd ;
Those awful syllables, Hell, death, and sin,
Though whisper'd, plainly tell what works within ;
That Conscience there performs her proper part,
And writes a doomsday sentence on his heart ;
Forsaking, and forsaken of all friends,
He now perceives where earthly pleasure ends ;
Hard task ! for one who lately knew no care,
And harder still as learnt beneath despair ;
His hours no longer pass unmark'd away,
A dark importance saddens ev'ry day ;
He hears the notice of the clock perplex'd,
And cries, Perhaps eternity strikes next ;
Sweet music is no longer music here,
And laughter sounds like madness in his ear :

His grief the World of all her pow'r disarms,
Wine has no taste, and beauty has no charms :
God's Holy Word, once trivial in his view,
Now by the voice of his experience true,
Seems, as it is, the fountain whence alone
Must spring that hope he pants to make his own.

Now let the bright reverse be known abroad ;
Say man's a worm, and pow'r belongs to God.

As when a felon, whom his country's laws
Have justly doom'd for some atrocious cause,
Expects in darkness and heart-chilling fears,
The shameful close of all his misspent years ;
If chance, on heavy pinions slowly borne,
A tempest usher in the dreadful morn,
Upon his dungeon walls the lightnings play,
The thunder seems to summon him away,
The warder at the door his key applies,
Shoots back the bolt, and all his courage dies :
If then, just then, all thoughts of mercy lost,
When Hope, long ling'ring, at last yields the ghost,
The sound of pardon pierce his startled ear,
He drops at once his fetters and his fear ;
A transport glows in all he looks and speaks,
And the first thankful tears bedew his cheeks.
Joy, far superior joy, that much outweighs
The comfort of a few poor added days,
Invades, possesses, and o'erwhelms the soul
Of him, whom Hope has with a touch made whole.
'Tis Heav'n, all Heav'n descending on the wings
Of the glad legions of the King of kings ;
'Tis more—tis God diffus'd through ev'ry part,
'Tis God himself triumphant in his heart.
O welcome now the Sun's once hated light,
His noonday beams were never half so bright.
Not kindred minds alone are call'd t' employ
Their hours, their days, in list'ning to his joy ;
Unconscious nature, all that he surveys,
Rocks, groves, and streams, must join him in his praise.

These are thy glorious works, eternal Truth,
The scoff of wither'd age, and beardless youth ;

These move the censure and illib'ral grin
Of fools, that hate thee and delight in sin :
But these shall last when night has quench'd the pole,
And Heav'n is all departed as a scroll.
And when, as Justice has long since decreed,
This Earth shall blaze, and a new world succeed,
Then these thy glorious works, and they who share
That hope, which can alone exclude despair,
Shall live exempt from weakness and decay,
The brightest wonders of an endless day.

Happy the bard, (if that fair name belong
To him, that blends no fable with his song,)
Whose lines uniting, by an honest art,
The faithful monitor's and poet's part,
Seek to delight, that they may mend mankind,
And, while they captivate, inform the mind :
Still happier, if he till a thankful soil,
And fruit reward his honourable toil :
But happier far, who comfort those that wait
To hear plain truth at Judah's hallow'd gate :
Their language simple, as their manners meek,
No shining ornaments have they to seek,
Nor labour they, nor time nor talents waste,
In sorting flow'rs to suit a fickle taste ;
But while they speak the wisdom of the skies,
Which art can only darken and disguise,
Th' abundant harvest, recompense divine,
Repays their work—the gleanings only mine.

CHARITY.

*Quâ nihil majus meliusve torris
Fata donavere bonique divi,
Neo dabunt, quamvis redeant in auram
Tempora priscum.*
Hor. Lib. iv. Od. 2.

FAIREST and foremost of the train, that wait
On man's most dignified and happiest state,
Whether we name thee Charity or Love,
Chief grace below, and all in all above,
Prosper (I press thee with a pow'ful plea)
A task I venture on, impell'd by thee :
O never seen but in thy blest effects,
Nor felt but in the soul that Heav'n selects ;
Who seeks to praise thee, and to make thee known
To other hearts, must have thee in his own.
Come, prompt me with benevolent desires,
Teach me to kindle at thy gentle fires,
And, though disgrac'd and slighted, to redeem
A poet's name, by making thee the theme.

God, working ever on a social plan,
By various ties attaches man to man :
He made at first, though free and unconfin'd,
One man the common father of the kind ;
That ev'ry tribe, though plac'd as he sees best,
Where seas or deserts part them from the rest,
Diff'ring in language, manners, or in face,
Might feel themselves allied to all the race.
When Cook—lamented, and with tears as just
As ever mingled with heroic dust,—
Steer'd Britain's oak into a world unknown,
And in his country's glory sought his own,
Wherever he found man, to nature true,
The rights of man were sacred in his view ;
He sooth'd with gifts, and greeted with a smile,
The simple native of the new-found isle ;

He spurn'd the wretch, that slighted or withstood
The tender argument of kindred blood,
Nor would endure, that any should control
His freeborn brethren of the southern pole.

But though some nobler minds a law respect,
That none shall with impunity neglect,
In baser souls unnumber'd evils meet,
To thwart its influence, and its end defeat.
While Cook is lov'd for savage lives he sav'd,
See Cortez odious for a world enslav'd !
Where wast thou then, sweet Charity ? where then,
Thou tutelary friend of helpless men ?
Wast thou in monkish cells and nunn'ries found,
Or building hospitals on English ground ?
No.—Mammon makes the World his legatee
Through fear, not love ; and Heav'n abhors the fee.
Wherever found, (and all men need thy care,)
Nor age nor infancy could find thee there.
The hand, that slew till it could slay no more,
Was glued to the sword-hilt with Indian gore.
Their prince, as justly seated on his throne
As vain imperial Philip on his own,
Trick'd out of all his royalty by art,
That stripp'd him bare, and broke his honest heart,
Died by the sentence of a shaven priest,
For scorning what they taught him to detest.
How dark the veil, that intercepts the blaze
Of Heav'n's mysterious purposes and ways ;
God stood not, though he seem'd to stand, aloof ;
And at this hour the conqu'ror feels the proof :
The wreath he won drew down an instant curse,
The fretting plague is in the public purse,
The canker'd spoil corrodes the pining state,
Starv'd by that indolence their minds create.

Oh could their ancient Incas rise again,
How would they take up Israel's taunting strain !
Art thou too fall'n, Iberia ? Do we see
The robber and the murd'rer weak as we ?
Thou, that hast wasted Earth, and dar'd despise
Alike the wrath and mercy of the skies,

Thy pomp is in the grave, thy glory laid
Low in the pits thine avarice has made.
We come with joy from our eternal rest,
To see th' oppressor in his turn oppress'd.
Art thou the god, the thunder of whose hand
Roll'd over all our desolated land,
Shook principalities and kingdoms down,
And made the mountains tremble at his frown ?
The sword shall light upon thy boasted pow'rs,
And waste them, as the sword has wasted ours.
'Tis thus Omnipotence his law fulfils,
And Vengeance executes what Justice wills.

Again—the band of commerce was design'd
T' associate all the branches of mankind ;
And if a boundless plenty be the robe,
Trade is the golden girdle of the globe.
Wise to promote whatever end he means,
God opens fruitful nature's various scenes :
Each climate needs what other climes produce,
And offers something to the gen'ral use ;
No land but listens to the common call,
And in return receives supply from all.
This genial intercourse, and mutual aid,
Cheers what were else a universal shade,
Calls Nature from her ivy-mantled den,
And softens human rock-work into men.
Ingenious Art, with her expressive face,
Steps forth to fashion and refine the race ;
Not only fills Necessity's demand,
But overcharges her capacious hand :
Capricious Taste itself can crave no more,
Than she supplies from her abounding store ;
She strikes out all that luxury can ask,
And gains new vigour at her endless task.
Hers is the spacious arch, the shapely spire,
The painter's pencil, and the poet's lyre ;
From her the canvass borrows light and shade,
And verse, more lasting, hues that never fade.
She guides the finger o'er the dancing keys,
Gives difficulty all the grace of ease,

And pours a torrent of sweet notes around,
Fast as the thirsting ear can drink the sound.

These are the gifts of Art, and Art thrives most
Where commerce has enrich'd the busy coast ;
He catches all improvements in his flight,
Spreads foreign wonders in his country's sight,
Imports what others have invented well,
And stirs his own to match them, or excel.
'Tis thus reciprocating, each with each,
Alternately the nations learn and teach ;
While Providence enjoins to ev'ry soul
A union with the vast terraqueous whole.

Heav'n speed the canvass, gallantly unfurl'd
To furnish and accommodate a world,
To give the pole the produce of the sun,
And knit th' unsocial climates into one.—
Soft airs and gentle heavings of the wave
Impel the fleet, whose errand is to save,
To succour wasted regions, and replace
The smile of Opulence in Sorrow's face.—
Let nothing adverse, nothing unforeseen,
Impede the bark, that ploughs the deep serene,
Charg'd with a freight transcending in its worth
The gems of India, Nature's rarest birth,
That flies, like Gabriel on his Lord's commands,
A herald of God's love to pagan lands.
But ah ! what wish can prosper, or what pray'r,
For merchants rich in cargoes of despair,
Who drive a loathsome traffic, gauge, and span,
And buy the muscles and the bones of man !
The tender ties of father, husband, friend,
All bonds of nature in that moment end ;
And each endures, while yet he draws his breath,
A stroke as fatal as the scythe of Death.
The sable warrior, frantic with regret
Of her he loves, and never can forget,
Loses in tears the far-receding shore,
But not the thought, that they must meet no more ;
Depriv'd of her and freedom at a blow,
What has he left that he can yet forego ?

Yes, to deep sadness sullenly resign'd,
 He feels his body's bondage in his mind ;
 Puts off his gen'rous nature ; and, to suit
 His manners with his fate, puts on the brute.

O most degrading of all ills, that wait
 On man, a mourner in his best estate !
 All other sorrows Virtue may endure,
 And find submission more than half a cure ;
 Grief is itself a med'cine, and bestow'd
 T' improve the fortitude that bears the load,
 To teach the wand'rer, as his woes increase,
 The path of Wisdom, all whose paths are peace ;
 But slav'ry !—Virtue dreads it as her grave :
 Patience itself is meanness in a slave ;
 Or if the will and sov'reignty of God
 Bid suffer it a while, and kiss the rod,
 Wait for the dawning of a brighter day,
 And snap the chain the moment when you may.
 Nature imprints upon whate'er we see,
 That has a heart and life in it, Be free ;
 The beasts are charter'd—neither age nor force
 Can quell the love of freedom in a horse :
 He breaks the cord that held him at the rack ;
 And, conscious of an unencumber'd back,
 Snuffs up the morning air, forgets the rein ;
 Loose fly his forelock and his ample mane ;
 Responsive to the distant neigh he neighs ;
 Nor stops till, overleaping all delays,
 He finds the pasture where his fellows graze.

Canst thou, and honour'd with a Christian name,
 Buy what is woman-born, and feel no shame ;
 Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead
 Expedience as a warrant for the deed ?
 So may the wolf, whom famine has made bold,
 To quit the forest and invade the fold :
 So may the ruffian, who, with ghostly glide,
 Dagger in hand, steals close to your bed-side ;
 Not he, but his emergence forc'd the door,
 He found it inconvenient to be poor.

Has God then given its sweetness to the cane,
Unless his laws be trampled on—in vain ?
Built a brave world, which cannot yet subsist,
Unless his right to rule it be dismiss'd ?
Impudent blasphemy ! So Folly pleads,
And, Av'rice being judge, with ease succeeds.

But grant the plea, and let it stand for just,
That man make man his prey, because he *must* ;
Still there is room for pity to abate,
And sooth the sorrows of so sad a state.
A Briton knows, or if he knows it not,
The Scripture plac'd within his reach, he ought,
That souls have no discriminating hue,
Alike important in their Maker's view ;
That none are free from blemish since the fall,
And Love divine has paid one price for all.
The wretch, that works and weeps without relief,
Has one that notices his silent grief.
He, from whose hands alone all pow'r proceeds,
Ranks its abuse among the foulest deeds,
Considers *all* injustice with a frown ;
But *marks* the man that treads his fellow down.
Begone—the whip and bell in that hard hand
Are hateful ensigns of usurp'd command.
Not Mexico could purchase kings a claim
To scourge him, weariness his only blame.
Remember Heav'n has an avenging rod :
To smite the poor is treason against God.

Trouble is grudgingly and hardly brook'd,
While life's sublimest joys are overlook'd :
We wander o'er a sunburnt thirsty soil,
Murm'ring and weary of our daily toil,
Forget t' enjoy the palm-tree's offer'd shade,
Or taste the fountain in the neighb'ring glade :
Else who would lose, that had the pow'r t' improve,
Th' occasion of transmuting fear to love ?
O 'tis a godlike privilege to save,
And he that scorns it is himself a slave.
Inform his mind ; one flash of heav'nly day
Would heal his heart, and melt his chains away.

"Beauty for ashes" is a gift indeed,
 And slaves, by truth enlarg'd, are doubly freed.
 Then would he say, submissive at thy feet,
 While gratitude and love made service sweet,—
 My dear deliv'rer out of hopeless night,
 Whose bounty bought me but to give me light,
 I was a bondman on my native plain,
 Sin forg'd, and Ignorance made fast, the chain ;
 Thy lips have shed instruction as the dew,
 Taught me what path to shun, and what pursue ;
 Farewell my former joys ! I sigh no more
 For Africa's once lov'd, benighted shore ;
 Serving a benefactor I am free ;
 At my best home, if not exil'd from thee.

Some men make gain a fountain, whence proceeds
 A stream of lib'ral and heroic deeds ;
 The swell of pity, not to be confin'd
 Within the scanty limits of the mind,
 Disdains the bank, and throws the golden sands,
 A rich deposite, on the bord'ring lands :
 These have an ear for his paternal call,
 Who makes some rich for the supply of all ;
 God's gift with pleasure in his praise employ ;
 And *Thornton* is familiar with the joy.

O could I worship aught beneath the skies,
 That earth has seen, or fancy can devise,
 Thine altar, sacred Liberty, should stand,
 Built by no mercenary vulgar hand,
 With fragrant turf, and flow'rs as wild and fair
 As ever dress'd a bank, or scented summer air.
 Duly, as ever on the mountain's height
 The peep of Morning shed a dawning light,
 Again, when Ev'ning, in her sober vest,
 Drew the gray curtain of the fading west,
 My soul should yield thee willing thanks and praise,
 For the chief blessings of my fairest days :
 But that were sacrilege—praise is not thine,
 But his who gave thee, and preserves thee mine :
 Else I would say, and as I spake bid fly
 A captive bird into the boundless sky.

This triple realm adores thee—thou art come
 From Sparta hither, and art here at home.
 We feel thy force still active, at this hour
 Enjoy immunity from priestly pow'r,
 While Conscience, happier than in ancient years,
 Owns no superior but the God she fears.
 Propitious spirit ! yet expunge a wrong
 Thy rights have suffer'd, and our land, too long.
 Teach mercy to ten thousand hearts, that share
 The fears and hopes of a commercial care.
 Prisons expect the wicked, and were built
 To bind the lawless, and to punish guilt ;
 But shipwreck, earthquake, battle, fire, and flood,
 Are mighty mischiefs, not to be withstood ;
 And honest Merit stands on slipp'ry ground,
 Where covert guile and artifice abound.
 Let just Restraint, for public peace design'd,
 Chain up the wolves and tigers of mankind ;
 The foe of virtue has no claim to thee,
 But let insolvent Innocence go free.

Patron of else the most despis'd of men,
 Accept the tribute of a stranger's pen ;
 Verse, like the laurel, its immortal meed,
 Should be the guerdon of a noble deed ;
 I may alarm thee, but I fear the shame
 (Charity chosen as my theme and aim)
 I must incur, forgetting *Howard's* name.
 Blest with all wealth can give thee, to resign
 Joys doubly sweet to feelings quick as thine,
 To quit the bliss thy rural scenes bestow,
 To seek a nobler amidst scenes of woe,
 To traverse seas, range kingdoms, and bring home,
 Not the proud monuments of Greece or Rome,
 But knowledge such as only dungeons teach,
 And only sympathy like thine could reach ;
 That grief, sequester'd from the public stage,
 Might smooth her feathers, and enjoy her cage ;
 Speaks a divine ambition, and a zeal,
 The boldest patriot might be proud to feel.

O that the voice of clamour and debate,
That pleads for peace till it disturbs the state,
Were hush'd in favour of thy gen'rous plea,
The poor thy clients, and Heav'n's smile thy fee !
Philosophy, that does not dream or stray,
Walks arm in arm with Nature all his way ;
Compasses earth, dives into it, ascends
Whatever steep Inquiry recommends ;
Sees planetary wonders smoothly roll
Round other systems under her control ;
Drinks wisdom at the milky stream of light,
That cheers the silent journey of the night,
And brings at his return a bosom charg'd
With rich instruction, and a soul enlarg'd.
The treasur'd sweets of the capacious plan,
That Heav'n spreads wide before the view of man,
All prompt his pleas'd pursuit, and to pursue
Still prompt him, with a pleasure always new :
He too has a connecting pow'r, and draws
Man to the centre of the common cause,
Aiding a dubious and deficient sight
With a new medium and a purer light.
All truth is precious, if not all divine ;
And what dilates the pow'rs must needs refine.
He reads the skies, and, watching ev'ry change,
Provides the faculties an ampler range ;
And wins mankind, as his attempts prevail,
A prouder station on the gen'ral scale.
But Reason still, unless divinely taught,
Whate'er she learns, learns nothing as she ought ;
The lamp of revelation only shows,
What human wisdom cannot but oppose,
That man, in nature's richest mantle clad,
And grac'd with all philosophy can add,
Though fair without, and luminous within,
Is still the progeny and heir of sin.
Thus taught, down falls the plumage of his pride ;
He feels his need of an unerring guide,
And knows that falling he shall rise no more,
Unless the pow'r that bade him stand restore.

This is indeed philosophy ; this known
 Makes wisdom, worthy of the name, his own ;
 And, without this, whatever he discuss ;
 Whether the space between the stars and us ;
 Whether he measure earth, compute the sea ;
 Weigh sunbeams, carve a fly, or spit a flea ;
 The solemn trifler with his boasted skill
 Toils much, and is a solemn trifler still :
 Blind was he born, and his misguided eyes
 Grown dim in trifling studies, blind he dies.
 Self-knowledge truly learn'd of course implies
 The rich possession of a nobler prize ;
 For self to self, and God to man reveal'd
 (Two themes to Nature's eye for ever seal'd),
 Are taught by rays, that fly with equal pace
 From the same centre of enlight'ning grace.
 Here stay thy foot ; how copious, and how clear,
 Th' o'erflowing well of Charity springs here !
 Hark ! 'tis the music of a thousand rills,
 Some thro' the groves, some down the sloping hills,
 Winding a secret or an open course,
 And all supplied from an eternal source.
 The ties of Nature do but feebly bind ;
 And Commerce partially reclaims mankind ;
 Philosophy, without his heav'nly guide,
 May blow up self-conceit, and nourish pride ;
 But, while his province is the reas'ning part,
 Has still a veil of midnight on his heart :
 'Tis Truth divine, exhibited on earth,
 Gives Charity her being and her birth.

Suppose (when thought is warm, and fancy flows,
 What will not argument sometimes suppose ?)
 An isle possess'd by creatures of our kind,
 Endued with reason, yet by nature blind.
 Let Supposition lend her aid once more,
 And land some grave optician on the shore :
 He claps his lens, if haply they may see,
 Close to the part where vision ought to be ;
 But finds, that, though his tubes assist the sight,
 They cannot give it, or make darkness light.

He reads wise lectures, and describes aloud
A sense they know not, to the wond'ring crowd ;
He talks of light, and the prismatic hues,
As men of depth in erudition use ;
But all he gains for his harangue is—Well,—
What monstrous lies some travellers will tell !

The soul, whose sight all-quick'ning grace renews,
Takes the resemblance of the good she views,
As diamonds, stripp'd of their opaque disguise,
Reflect the noonday glory of the skies.

She speaks of him, her author, guardian, friend,
Whose love knew no beginning, knows no end,
In language warm as all that love inspires,
And in the glow of her intense desires,
Pants to communicate her noble fires.

She sees a world stark blind to what employs
Her eager thought, and feeds her flowing joys ;
Though Wisdom hail them, heedless of her call,
Flies to save some, and feels a pang for all :

Herself as weak as her support is strong,
She feels that frailty she denied so long ;
And, from a knowledge of her own disease,
Learns to compassionate the sick she sees.

Here see, acquitted of all vain pretence,
The reign of genuine Charity commence.

Though scorn repay her sympathetic tears,
She still is kind, and still she perseveres ;
The truth she loves a sightless world blaspheme,
'Tis childish dotage, a delirious dream ;
The danger they discern not, they deny ;
Laugh at their only remedy, and die.

But still a soul thus touch'd can never cease,
Whoever threatens war, to speak of peace.

Pure in her aim, and in her temper mild,
Her wisdom seems the weakness of a child :
She makes excuses where she might condemn,
Revil'd by those that hate her, prays for them ;
Suspicion lurks not in her artless breast,
The worst suggested, she believes the best ;

Not soon provok'd, however stung and teas'd,
And, if perhaps made angry, soon appeas'd ;
She rather waves than will dispute her right,
And, injur'd, makes forgiveness her delight.

Such was the portrait an apostle drew,
The bright original was one he knew ;
Heav'n held his hand, the likeness must be true.

When one, that holds communion with the skies,
Has fill'd his urn where these pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings ;
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.
So when a ship, well freighted with the stores
The sun matures on India's spicy shores,
Has dropp'd her anchor, and her canvass furl'd,
In some safe haven of our western world,
'Twere vain inquiry to what port she went,
The gale informs us, laden with the scent.

Some seek, when queasy conscience has its qualms,
To hush the painful malady with alms ;
But charity not feign'd intends alone
Another's good—theirs centres in their own ;
And, too short liv'd to reach the realms of peace,
Must cease for ever when the poor shall cease.
Flavia, most tender of her own good name,
Is rather careless of her sister's fame ;
Her superfluity the poor supplies,
But, if she touch a character, it dies.
The seeming virtue weigh'd against the vice,
She deems all safe, for she has paid the price :
No charity but alms aught values she,
Except in porcelain on her mantel-tree.
How many deeds, with which the world has rung,
From Pride, in league with Ignorance, have sprung !
But God o'errules all human follies still,
And bends the tough materials to his will.
A conflagration, or a wintry flood,
Has left some hundreds without home or food ;

Extravagance and Avarice shall subscribe,
While fame and self-complacence are the bribe.
The brief proclaim'd, it visits ev'ry pew,
But first the squire's, a compliment but due :
With slow deliberation he unties
His glitt'ring purse, that envy of all eyes,
And, while the clerk just puzzles out the psalm,
Slides guinea behind guinea in his palm ;
Till finding, what he might have found before,
A smaller piece amidst the precious store,
Pinch'd close between his finger and his thumb,
He half exhibits, and then drops the sum.
Gold to be sure !—Throughout the town 'tis told,
How the good squire gives never less than gold.
From motives such as his, though not the best,
Springs in due time supply for the distress'd ;
Not less effectual than what love bestows,
Except that office clips it as it goes.

But lest I seem to sin against a friend,
And wound the grace I mean to recommend,
(Though vice derided with a just design
Implies no trespass against love divine,)
Once more I would adopt the graver style,
A teacher should be sparing of his smile.
Unless a love of virtue light the flame,
Satire is, more than those he brands, to blame !
He hides behind a magisterial air
His own offences, and strips others bare ;
Affects indeed a most humane concern,
That men, if gently tutor'd, will not learn,
That mulish Polly, not to be reclaim'd
By softer methods, must be made ashamed ;
But (I might instance in St Patrick's dean)
Too often rails to gratify his spleen.
Most sat'rists are indeed a public scourge ;
Their mildest physic is a farrier's purge ;
Their acrid temper turns, as soon as stirr'd,
The milk of their good purpose all to curd.
Their zeal begotten, as their works rehearse,
By lean despair upon an empty purse,

The wild assassins start into the street,
Prepar'd to poniard whomsoe'er they meet.
No skill in swordmanship, however just,
Can be secure against a madman's thrust ;
And even Virtue, so unfairly match'd,
Although immortal, may be prick'd or scratch'd.
When Scandal has new minted an old lie,
Or tax'd invention for a fresh supply,
'Tis call'd a satire, and the world appears
Gath'ring around it with erected ears :
A thousand names are toss'd into the crowd ;
Some whisper'd softly and some twang'd aloud ;
Just as the sapience of an author's brain
Suggests it safe or dang'rous to be plain.
Strange ! how the frequent interjected dash
Quickens a market, and helps off the trash ;
Th' important letters, that include the rest,
Serve as a key to those that are suppress'd ;
Conjecture gripes the victims in his paw,
The world is charm'd, and Scrib escapes the law.
So, when the cold damp shades of night prevail,
Worms may be caught by either head or tail ;
Forcibly drawn from many a close recess,
They meet with little pity, no redress ;
Plung'd in the stream they lodge upon the mud,
Food for the famish'd rovers of the flood.

All zeal for a reform, that gives offence
To peace and charity, is mere pretence :
A bold remark, but which, if well applied,
Would humble many a tow'ring poet's pride.
Perhaps the man was in a sportive fit,
And had no other play-place for his wit ;
Perhaps enchanted with the love of fame,
He sought the jewel in his neighbour's shame ;
Perhaps—whatever end he might pursue,
The cause of virtue could not be his view.
At ev'ry stroke wit flashes in our eyes ;
The turns are quick, the polish'd points surprise,
But shine with cruel and tremendous charms,
That, while they please, possess us with alarms ;

So have I seen (and hasten'd to the sight
On all the wings of holiday delight),
Where stands that monument of ancient pow'r,
Nam'd, with emphatic dignity, the Tow'r,
Guns, halberts, swords, and pistols, great and small,
In starry forms dispos'd upon the wall ;
We wonder, as we gazing stand below,
That brass and steel should make so fine a show ;
But though we praise th' exact designer's skill,
Account them implements of mischief still.

No works shall find acceptance in that day,
When all disguises shall be rent away,
That square not truly with the Scripture plan,
Nor spring from love to God, or love to man.
As he ordains things sordid in their birth
To be resolv'd into their parent earth ;
And, though the soul shall seek superior orbs,
Whate'er this world produces, it absorbs ;
So self starts nothing, but what tends apace
Home to the goal, where it began the race.
Such as our motive is, our aim must be ;
If this be servile, that can ne'er be free :
If self employ us, whatsoe'er is wrought,
We glorify that self, not him we ought ;
Such virtues had need prove their own reward,
The judge of all men owes them no regard.
True Charity, a plant divinely nurs'd,
Fed by the love from which it rose at first,
Thrives against hope, and, in the rudest scene,
Storms but enliven its unfading green :
Exub'rant is the shadow it supplies,
Its fruit on earth, its growth above the skies.
To look at Him, who form'd us and redeem'd,
So glorious now, though once so disesteem'd,
To see a God stretch forth his human hand,
T' uphold the boundless scenes of his command ;
To recollect, that, in a form like ours,
He bruise'd beneath his feet th' infernal pow'rs,
Captivity led captive, rose to claim
The wreath he won so dearly in our name ;

That, thron'd above all height, he condescends
To call the few that trust in him his friends ;
That, in the Heav'n of heav'ns, that space he deems
Too scanty for th' exertion of his beams,
And shines, as if impatient to bestow
Life and a kingdom upon worms below ;
That sight imparts a never-dying flame,
Though feeble in degree, in kind the same.
Like him the soul, thus kindled from above,
Spreads wide her arms of universal love ;
And, still enlarg'd as she receives the grace,
Includes creation in her close embrace.
Behold a Christian ! and without the fires
The founder of that name alone inspires,
Though all accomplishments, all knowledge meet,
To make the shining prodigy complete,
Whoever boasts that name—behold a cheat !
Were love, in these the world's last doting years,
As frequent as the want of it appears,
The churches warm'd, they would no longer hold
Such frozen figures, stiff as they are cold ;
Relenting forms would lose their pow'r, or cease ;
And e'en the dipp'd and sprinkled live in peace :
Each heart would quit its prison in the breast,
And flow in free communion with the rest.
The statesman, skill'd in projects dark and deep
Might burn his useless Machiavel, and sleep ;
His budget often fill'd, yet always poor,
Might swing at ease behind his study door,
No longer prey upon our annual rents,
Nor scare the nation with its big contents :
Disbanded legions freely might depart,
And slaying man would cease to be an art.
No learned disputants would take the field,
Sure not to conquer, and sure not to yield ;
Both sides deceiv'd, if rightly understood,
Pelting each other for the public good.
Did charity prevail, the press would prove
A vehicle of virtue, truth, and love ;

And I might spare myself the pains to show
What few can learn, and all suppose they know.
Thus have I sought to grace a serious lay
With many a wild, indeed, but flow'ry spray,
In hopes to gain, what else I must have lost,
Th' attention pleasure has so much engross'd.
But if, unhappily deceiv'd, I dream,
And prove too weak for so divine a theme,
Let Charity forgive me a mistake,
That zeal, not vanity, has chanc'd to make,
And spare the poet for his subject's sake.

CONVERSATION.

*Nam neque me tantum ventientis abilius auri,
Nec percussa juvant flucta tam litora, nec quæ
Saxosæ inter decurrunt flumina valles.*

Virg. Ecl. 5.

THOUGH nature weigh our talents, and dispense
To ev'ry man his modicum of sense,
And Conversation in its better part
May be esteem'd a gift, and not an art,
Yet much depends, as in the tiller's toil,
On culture, and the sowing of the soil.
Words learn'd by rote a parrot may rehearse,
But talking is not always to converse;
Not more distinct from harmony divine,
The constant creaking of a country sign.
As alphabets in ivory employ,
Hour after hour, the yet unletter'd boy,
Sorting and puzzling with a deal of glee
Those seeds of science call'd his A B C;
So language in the mouths of the adult,
Witness its insignificant result,
Too often proves an implement of play,
A toy to sport with, and pass time away.
Collect at ev'ning what the day brought forth,
Compress the sum into its solid worth,
And if it weigh th' importance of a fly,
The scales are false, or algebra a lie.
Sacred interpreter of human thought,
How few respect or use thee as they ought!
But all shall give account of ev'ry wrong,
Who dare dishonour or defile the tongue;
Who prostitute it in the cause of vice,
Or sell their glory at a market-price;
Who vote for hire, or point it with lampoon,
The dear-bought placeman, and the cheap buffoon.

There is a prurience in the speech of some,
Wrath stays him, or else God would strike them dumb:
His wise forbearance has their end in view,
They fill their measure, and receive their due.
The heathen law-givers of ancient days,
Names almost worthy of a Christian's praise,
Would drive them forth from the resort of men,
And shut up ev'ry satyr in his den.

O come not ye near innocence and truth,
Ye worms that eat into the bud of youth!
Infectious as impure, your blighting pow'r
Taints in its rudiments the promis'd flow'r;
Its odour perish'd and its charming hue,
Thenceforth 'tis hateful, for it smells of you.
Not e'en the vigorous and headlong rage
Of adolescence, or a firmer age,
Affords a plea allowable or just
For making speech the pamperer of lust;
But when the breath of age commits the fault,
'Tis nauseous as the vapour of a vault.
So wither'd stumps disgrace the sylvan scene,
No longer fruitful, and no longer green;
The sapless wood, divested of the bark,
Grows fungous, and takes fire at ev'ry spark.

Oaths terminate, as Paul observes, all strife—
Some men have surely then a peaceful life;
Whatever subject occupy discourse,
The feats of Vastis, or the naval force,
Asseveration blust'ring in your face
Makes contradiction such a hopeless case:
In ev'ry tale they tell, or false or true,
Well known, or such as no man ever knew,
They fix attention, heedless of your pain,
With oaths like rivets forc'd into the brain;
And e'en when sober truth prevails throughout,
They swear it, till affirmance breeds a doubt.
A Persian, humble servant of the sun,
Who, though devout, yet bigotry had none,
Hearing a lawyer, grave in his address,
With adjurations ev'ry word impress,

Suppos'd the man a bishop, or, at least,
God's name so much upon his lips, a priest ;
Bow'd at the close with all his graceful airs,
And begg'd an int'rest in his frequent pray'rs.

Go, quit the rank to which ye stood preferr'd,
Henceforth associate in one common herd ;
Religion, virtue, reason, common sense,
Pronounce your human form a false pretence ;
A mere disguise, in which a devil lurks,
Who yet betrays his secret by his works.

Ye pow'rs who rule the tongue, if such there are,
And make colloquial happiness your care, ,
Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate,
A duel in the form of a debate.
The clash of arguments and jar of words,
Worse than the mortal brunt of rival swords,
Decide no question with their tedious length,
For opposition gives opinion strength.
Divert the champions prodigal of breath ;
And put the peaceably-dispos'd to death.
O thwart me not, Sir Soph, at ev'ry turn,
Nor carp at ev'ry flaw you may discern ;
Though syllogisms hang not on my tongue,
I am not surely always in the wrong ;
'Tis hard if all is false that I advance,
A fool must now and then be right by chance.
Not that all freedom of dissent I blame ;
No—there I grant the privilege I claim.
A disputable point is no man's ground ;
Rove where you please, 'tis common all around.
Discourse may want an animated—No,
To brush the surface, and to make it flow ;
But still remember, if you mean to please,
To press your point with modesty and ease.
The mark, at which my juster aim I take,
Is contradiction for its own dear sake.
Set your opinion at whatever pitch,
Knots and impediments make something hitch ;
Adopt his own, 'tis equally in vain,
Your thread of argument is snapp'd again ;

The wrangler, rather than accord with you,
 Will judge himself deceiv'd, and prove it too.
 Vociferated logic kills me quite,
 A noisy man is always in the right :
 I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,
 Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare,
 And, when I hope his blunders are all out,
 Reply discreetly—To be sure—no doubt !
Dubius is such a scrupulous good man—
 Yes—you may catch him tripping, if you can.
 He would not, with a peremptory tone,
 Assert the nose upon his face his own ;
 With hesitation admirably slow,
 He humbly hopes—presumes—it may be so.
 His evidence, if he were call'd by law
 To swear to some enormity he saw,
 For want of prominence and just relief,
 Would hang an honest man, and save a thief
 Through constant dread of giving truth offence,
 He ties up all his hearers in suspense ;
 Knows what he knows, as if he knew it not ;
 What he remembers, seems to have forgot ;
 His sole opinion, whatsoe'er befall,
 Cent'ring at last in having none at all.
 Yet, though he tease and balk your list'ning ear,
 He makes one useful point exceeding clear ;
 Howe'er ingenious on his darling theme
 A sceptic in philosophy may seem,
 Reduc'd to practice, his beloved rule
 Would only prove him a consummate fool ;
 Useless in him alike both brain and speech,
 Fate having plac'd all truth above his reach,
 His ambiguities his total sum,
 He might as well be blind, and deaf, and dumb.

Where men of judgment creep and feel their way,
 The positive pronounce without dismay ;
 Their want of light and intellect supplied
 By sparks absurdity strikes out of pride.
 Without the means of knowing right from wrong,
 They always are decisive, clear, and strong ;

Where others toil with philosophic force,
Their nimble nonsense takes a shorter course ;
Flings at your head conviction in the lump,
And gains remote conclusions at a jump ;
Their own defect, invisible to them,
Seen in another, they at once condemn ;
And, though self-idoliz'd in ev'ry case,
Hate their own likeness in a brother's face.
The cause is plain, and not to be denied,
The proud are always most provok'd by pride ;
Few competitions but engender spite ;
And those the most, where neither has a right.

The point of honour has been deem'd of use,
To teach good manners, and to curb abuse ;
Admit it true, the consequence is clear,
Our polish'd manners are a mask we wear,
And, at the bottom, barb'rous still and rude,
We are restrain'd, indeed, but not subdu'd.
The very remedy, however sure,
Springs from the mischief it intends to cure,
And savage in its principle appears,
Tried, as it should be, by the fruit it bears.
'Tis hard, indeed, if nothing will defend
Mankind from quarrels but their fatal end ;
That now and then a hero must de cease,
That the surviving world may live in peace.
Perhaps at last close scrutiny may show
The practice dastardly, and mean, and low ;
That men engage in it compell'd by force,
And fear, not courage, is its proper source ;
The fear of tyrant custom, and the fear
Lest fops should censure us, and fools should sneer.
At least, to trample on our Maker's laws,
And hazard life for any or no cause,
To rush into a fix'd eternal state
Out of the very flames of rage and hate,
Or send another shiv'ring to the bar
With all the guilt of such unnat'ral war,
Whatever Use may urge, or Honour plead,
On Reason's verdict is a madman's deed.

Am I to set my life upon a throw,
 Because a bear is rude and surly ? No—
 A moral, sensible, and well-bred man
 Will not affront me ; and no other can.
 Were I empow'r'd to regulate the lists,
 They should encounter with well-loaded fists ;
 A Trojan combat would be something new,
 Let *Dares* beat *Entellus* black and blue ;
 Then each might show, to his admiring friends,
 In honourable bumps his rich amends,
 And carry, in contusions of his skull,
 A satisfactory receipt in full.

A story, in which native humour reigns,
 Is often useful, always entertains :
 A graver fact, enlisted on your side,
 May furnish illustration, well applied ;
 But sedentary weavers of long tales
 Give me the fidgets, and my patience fails.
 'Tis the most asinine employ on earth,
 To hear them tell of parentage and birth,
 And echo conversations, dull and dry,
 Embellish'd with—*He said*, and *So said I*.
 At ev'ry interview their route the same,
 The repetition makes attention lame :
 We bustle up with unsuccessful speed,
 And in the saddest part cry—*Droll indeed !*
 The path of narrative with care pursue,
 Still making probability your clew ;
 On all the vestiges of truth attend,
 And let *them* guide you to a decent end.
 Of all ambitions man may entertain,
 The worst, that can invade a sickly brain,
 Is that, which angles hourly for surprise,
 And baits its hook with prodigies and lies.
 Credulous infancy, or age as weak,
 Are fittest auditors for such to seek,
 Who to please others will themselves disgrace,
 Yet please not, but affront you to your face.
 A great retailer of this curious ware
 Having unloaded and made many stare,

Can this be true?—an arch observer cries,
 Yes (rather mov'd), I saw it with these eyes;
 Sir! I believe it on that ground alone;
 I could not, had I seen it with my own.

A tale should be judicious, clear, succinct;
 The language plain, and incidents well link'd;
 Tell not as new what ev'ry body knows,
 And, new or old, still hasten to a close;
 There, centring in a focus round and neat,
 Let all your rays of information meet.
 What neither yields us profit nor delight
 Is like a nurse's lullaby at night;
 Guy Earl of Warwick and fair Eleanore,
 Or giant-killing Jack, would please me more.

The pipe, with solemn interposing puff,
 Makes half a sentence at a time enough;
 The dozing sages drop the drowsy strain,
 Then pause, and puff—and speak, and pause again.
 Such often, like the tube they so admire,
 Important triflers! have more smoke than fire.
 Pernicious weed! whose scent the fair annoys,
 Unfriendly to society's chief joys,
 Thy worst effect is banishing for hours
 The sex, whose presence civilizes ours.
 Thou art indeed the drug a gard'ner wants,
 To poison vermin that infest his plants;
 But are we so to wit and beauty blind,
 As to despise the glory of our kind,
 And show the softest minds and fairest forms
 As little mercy, as he grubs and worms?
 They dare not wait the riotous abuse,
 Thy thirst-creating steams at length produce,
 When wine has giv'n indecent language birth,
 And forc'd the floodgates of licentious mirth;
 For sea-born Venus her attachment shows
 Still to that element, from which she rose,
 And with a quiet, which no fumes disturb,
 Sips meek infusions of a milder herb.

Th' emphatic speaker dearly loves t' oppose
 In contact inconvenient, nose to nose.

As if the gnomon on his neighbour's phiz,
 Touch'd with the magnet, had attracted his.
 His whisper'd theme, dilated and at large,
 Proves after all a wind-gun's airy charge,
 An extract of his diary—no more,
 A tasteless journal of the day before.
 He walk'd abroad, o'ertaken in the rain,
 Call'd on a friend, drank tea, stepp'd home again,
 Resum'd his purpose, had a world of talk
 With one he stumbled on, and lost his walk.
 I interrupt him with a sudden bow,
 Adieu, dear sir ! lest you should lose it now.

I cannot talk with civet in the room,
 A fine puss-gentleman that's all perfume ;
 The sight's enough—no need to smell a beau—
 Who thrusts his nose into a raree-show ?
 His odoriferous attempts to please
 Perhaps might prosper with a swarm of bees ;
 But we that make no honey, though we sting,
 Poets, are sometimes apt to maul the thing.
 'Tis wrong to bring into a mix'd resort,
 What makes some sick, and others *à-la-mort* :
 An argument of cogence, we may say,
 Why such a one should keep himself away.

A graver coxcomb we may sometimes see,
 Quite as absurd, though not so light as he :
 A shallow brain behind a serious mask,
 An oracle within an empty cask,
 The solemn fop ; significant and budge ;
 A fool with judges, amongst fools a judge ;
 He says but little, and that little said
 Owes all its weight, like loaded dice, to lead.
 His wit invites you by his looks to come,
 But when you knock, it never is at home.
 'Tis like a parcel sent you by the stage,
 Some handsome present, as your hopes presage ;
 'Tis heavy, bulky, and bids fair to prove
 An absent friend's fidelity and love ;
 But when unpack'd, your disappointment groans
 To find it stuff'd with brickbats, earth, and stones.

Some men employ their health, an ugly trick,
 In making known how oft they have been sick,
 And give us in recitals of disease
 A doctor's trouble, but without the foes ;
 Relate how many weeks they kept their bed,
 How an emetic or cathartic sped ;
 Nothing is slightly touch'd, much less forgot,
 Nose, ears, and eyes, seem present on the spot.
 Now the distemper, spite of draught or pill,
 Victorious seem'd, and now the doctor's skill ;
 And now—alas for unforeseen mishaps !
 They put on a damp nightcap and relapse ;
 They thought they must have died, they were so bad ;
 Their peevish hearers almost wish they had.

Some fretful tempers wince at ev'ry touch,
 You always do too little or too much :
 You speak with life, in hopes to entertain,
 Your elevated voice goes through the brain ;
 You fall at once into a lower key,
 That's worse—the drone-pipe of an humble bee.
 The southern sash admits too strong a light,
 You rise and drop the curtain—now 'tis night.
 He shakes with cold—you stir the fire and strive
 To make a blaze—that's roasting him alive.
 Serve him with venison, and he chooses fish ;
 With sole—that's just the sort he would not wish.
 He takes what he at first profess'd so loath,
 And in due time feeds heartily on both ;
 Yet still, o'erclouded with a constant frown,
 He does not swallow, but he gulps it down.
 Your hope to please him vain on ev'ry plan,
 Himself should work that wonder, if he can—
 Alas ! his efforts double his distress,
 He likes yours little, and his own still less.
 Thus always teasing others, always teas'd,
 His only pleasure is—to be displeas'd.

I pity bashful men, who feel the pain
 Of fancied scorn and undeserv'd disdain,
 And bear the marks upon a blushing face
 Of needless shame, and self-impos'd disgrace.

Our sensibilities are so acute,
The fear of being silent makes us mute.
We sometimes think we could a speech produce
Much to the purpose, if our tongues were loose ;
But being tried, it dies upon the lip,
Faint as a chicken's note that has the pip :
Our wasted oil unprofitably burns,
Like hidden lamps in old sepulchral urns.
Few Frenchmen of this evil have complain'd ;
It seems as if we Britons were ordain'd,
By way of wholesome curb upon our pride,
To fear each other, fearing none beside.
The cause perhaps inquiry may decry,
Self-searching with an introverted eye,
Conceal'd within an unsuspected part,
The vainest corner of our own vain heart :
For ever aiming at the world's esteem,
Our self-importance ruins its own scheme ;
In other eyes our talents rarely shown,
Become at length so splendid in our own,
We dare not risk them into public view,
Lest they miscarry of what seems their due.
True modesty is a discerning grace,
And only blushes in the proper place ;
But counterfeit is blind, and sculks through fear,
Where 'tis a shame to be ashamed t' appear :
Humility the parent of the first,
The last by vanity produc'd and nurs'd.
The circle form'd, we sit in silent state,
Like figures drawn upon a dial plate ;
Yes ma'am, and no ma'am, utter'd softly, show
Ev'ry five minutes how the minutes go ;
Each individual, suff'ring a constraint
Poetry may, but colours cannot paint ;
As if in close committee on the sky,
Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry ;
And finds a changing clime a happy source
Of wise reflection, and well-tim'd discourse.
We next inquire, but softly and by stealth,
Like conservators of the public health,

Of epidemic throats, if such there are,
 And coughs, and rheums, and phthisic, and catarrh.
 That theme exhausted, a wide chasm ensues,
 Fill'd up at last with interesting news,
 Who danc'd with whom, and who are like to wed,
 And who is hang'd, and who is brought to bed :
 But fear to call a more important cause,
 As if 'twere treason against English laws.
 The visit paid, with ecstasy we come,
 As from a sev'n years transportation, home,
 And there resume an unembarrass'd brow,
 Recov'ring what we lost we know not how,
 The faculties, that seem'd reduc'd to nought,
 Expression and the privilege of thought.

The reeking, roaring hero of the chase,
 I give him over as a desp'rate case.
 Physicians write in hopes to work a cure,
 Never, if honest ones, when death is sure ;
 And though the fox he follows may be tam'd,
 A mere fox-foll'wer never is reclaim'd.
 Some farrier should prescribe his proper course,
 Whose only fit companion is his horse ;
 Or if, deserving of a better doom,
 The noble beast judge otherwise, his groom.
 Yet e'en the rogue that serves him, though he stand,
 To take his honour's orders, cap in hand,
 Prefers his fellow grooms with much good sense,
 Their skill a truth, his master's a pretence.
 If neither horse nor groom affect the squire,
 Where can at last his jockeyship retire ?
 O to the club, the scene of savage joys,
 The school of coarse good fellowship and noise ;
 There, in the sweet society of those,
 Whose friendship from his boyish years he chose,
 Let him improve his talent if he can,
 Till none but beasts acknowledge him a man.

Man's heart had been impenetrably seal'd,
 Like theirs that cleave the flood or graze the field,
 Had not his Maker's all-bestowing hand
 Giv'n him a soul, and bade him understand ;

The reas'ning pow'r vouchsaf'd of course inferr'd
The pow'r to clothe that reason with his word ;
For all is perfect, that God works on earth,
And he, that gives conception, aids the birth.
If this be plain, 'tis plainly understood,
What uses of his boon the Giver would.
The Mind, despatch'd upon her busy toil,
Should range where Providence has bless'd the soil ;
Visiting ev'ry flow'r with labour meet,
And gath'ring all her treasures sweet by sweet,
She should imbue the tongue with what she sips,
And shed the balmy blessing on the lips,
That good diffus'd may more abundant grow,
And speech may praise the pow'r that bids it flow.
Will the sweet warbler of the livelong night,
That fills the list'ning lover with delight,
Forget his harmony, with rapture heard,
To learn the twitt'ring of a meaner bird ?
Or make the parrot's mimicry his choice,
That odious libel on a human voice ?
No—Nature, unsophisticate by man,
Starts not aside from her Creator's plan ;
The melody, that was at first design'd
To cheer the rude forefathers of mankind,
Is note for note deliver'd in our ears,
In the last scene of her six thousand years.
Yet Fashion, leader of a chatt'ring train,
Whom man, for his own hurt, permits to reign,
Who shifts and changes all things but his shape,
And would degrade her vot'ry to an ape,
The fruitful parent of abuse and wrong,
Holds a usurp'd dominion o'er his tongue ;
There sits and prompts him with his own disgrace,
Prescribes the theme, the tone, and the grimace,
And, when accomplish'd in her wayward school,
Calls gentleman whom she has made a fool.
'Tis an unalterable fix'd decree,
That none could frame or ratify but she,
That heav'n and hell, and righteousness and sin,
Snares in his path, and foes that lurk within,

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God and his attributes (a field of day
 Where 'tis an angel's happiness to stray),
 Fruits of his love and wonders of his might,
 Be never nam'd in ears esteem'd polite.
 That he who dares, when she forbids, be grave,
 Shall stand proscrib'd, a madman or a knave,
 A close designer not to be believ'd,
 Or, if excus'd that charge, at least deceiv'd.
 Oh folly worthy of the nurse's lap,
 Give it the breast, or stop its mouth with pap!
 Is it incredible, or can it seem
 A dream to any, except those that dream,
 That man should love his Maker, and *that* fire,
 Warming his heart, should at his lips transpire?
 Know then, and modestly let fall your eyes,
 And veil your daring crest that braves the skies;
 That air of insolence affronts your God,
 You need his pardon, and provoke his rod:
 Now, in a posture that becomes you more
 Than that heroic strut assum'd before,
 Know, your arrears with ev'ry hour accrue
 For mercy shown, while wrath is justly due.
 The time is short, and there are souls on earth,
 Though future pain may serve for present mirth,
 Acquainted with the woes, that fear or shame,
 By Fashion taught, forbade them once to name,
 And, having felt the pangs you deem a jest,
 Have prov'd them truths too big to be express'd.
 Go seek on revelation's hallow'd ground,
 Sure to succeed, the remedy they found;
 Touch'd by that pow'r that you have dar'd to mock
 That makes seas stable, and dissolves the rock,
 Your heart shall yield a life-renewing stream,
 That fools, as you have done, shall call a dream.
 It happen'd on a solemn eventide,
 Soon after He that was our Surety died,
 Two bosom friends, each pensively inclin'd,
 The scene of all those sorrows left behind,
 Sought their own village, busied as they went
 In musings worthy of the great event:

They spake of him they lov'd, of him whose life,
Though blameless, had incurr'd perpetual strife,
Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,
A deep memorial graven on their hearts.
The recollection, like a vein of ore,
The farther trac'd, enrich'd them still the more ;
They thought him, and they justly thought him, one
Sent to do more than he appear'd t' have done ;
T' exalt a people, and to place them high
Above all else, and wonder'd he should die.
Ere yet they brought their journey to an end,
A stranger join'd them, courteous as a friend,
And ask'd them, with a kind, engaging air,
What their affliction was, and begg'd a share.
Inform'd, he gather'd up the broken thread,
And, truth and wisdom gracing all he said,
Explain'd, illustrated, and search'd so well
The tender theme, on which they chose to dwell,
That, reaching home, The night, they said, is near,
We must not now be parted, sojourn here—
The new acquaintance soon became a guest,
And, made so welcome at their simple feast,
He bless'd the bread, but vanish'd at the word,
And left them both exclaiming, 'Twas the Lord !
Did not our hearts feel all he deign'd to say ?
Did they not burn within us by the way ?

Now theirs was converse, such as it behoves
Man to maintain, and such as God approves :
Their views, indeed, were indistinct and dim,
But yet successful, being aim'd at him.
Christ and his character their only scope,
Their object, and their subject, and their hope,
They felt what it became them much to feel,
And, wanting him to loose the sacred zeal,
Found him as prompt, as their desire was true,
To spread the newborn glories in their view.
Well—what are ages and the lapse of time,
Match'd against truths, as lasting as sublime ?
Can length of years on God himself exact ?
Or make that fiction, which was once a fact ?

No—marble and recording brass decay,
And, like the graver's mem'ry, pass away ;
The works of man inherit, as is just,
Their author's frailty, and return to dust :
But truth divine for ever stands secure,
Its head as guarded as its base is sure ;
Fix'd in the rolling flood of endless years,
The pillar of th' eternal plan appears,
The raving storm and dashing wave defies,
Built by that architect who built the skies.
Hearts may be found, that harbour at this hour
That love of Christ, and all its quick'ning pow'r ;
And lips unstain'd by folly or by strife,
Whose wisdom, drawn from the deep well of life,
Tastes of its healthful origin, and flows
A Jordan for th' ablution of our woes.
O days of heav'n, and nights of equal praise,
Serene and peaceful as those heav'nly days,
When souls drawn upward in communion sweet,
Enjoy the stillness of some close retreat,
Discourse, as if releas'd and safe at home,
Of dangers past, and wonders yet to come,
And spread the sacred treasures of the breast
Upon the lap of covenanted Rest.

What, always dreaming over heav'nly things,
Like angel-heads in stone with pigeon-wings ?
Canting and whining out all day the word,
And half the night ? Fanatic and absurd !
Mine be the friend less frequent in his pray'rs,
Who makes no bustle with his soul's affairs,
Whose wit can brighten up a wintry day,
And chase the splenetic dull hours away ;
Content on earth in earthly things to shine,
Who waits for heav'n ere he becomes divine,
Leaves saints t' enjoy those altitudes they teach,
And plucks the fruit plac'd more within his reach.

Well spoken, advocate of sin and shame,
Known by thy bleating, Ignorance thy name.
Is sparkling wit the world's exclusive right ?
The fix'd fee-simple of the vain and light ?

Can hopes of heav'n, bright prospects of an hour,
That come to waft us out of Sorrow's pow'r,
Obscure or quench a faculty, that finds
Its happiest soil in the serenest minds ?
Religion curbs indeed its wanton play,
And brings the trifler under rig'rous sway,
But gives it usefulness unknown before,
And, purifying, makes it shine the more.
A Christian's wit is inoffensive light,
A beam that aids, but never grieves the sight ;
Vig'rous in age as in the flush of youth,
'Tis always active on the side of truth ;
Temp'rance and peace ensure its healthful state,
And make it brightest at its latest date.
Oh I have seen (nor hope perhaps in vain,
Ere life go down, to see such sights again)
A vet'ran warrior in the Christian field,
Who never saw the sword he could not wield ;
Grave without dulness, learned without pride,
Exact, yet not precise, though meek, keen-ey'd ;
A man that would have foil'd at their own play
A dozen would-be's of the modern day ;
Who, when occasion justified its use,
Had wit as bright as ready to produce,
Could fetch from records of an earlier age,
Or from philosophy's enlighten'd page,
His rich materials, and regale your ear
With strains it was a privilege to hear :
Yet, above all, his luxury supreme,
And his chief glory, was the Gospel theme ;
There he was copious as old Greece or Rome,
His happy eloquence seem'd there at home,
Ambitious not to shine or to excel,
But to treat justly what he lov'd so well.

It moves me more perhaps than folly ought,
When some green heads, as void of wit as thought,
Suppose *themselves* monopolists of sense,
And wiser men's ability pretence.
Though time will wear us, and we must grow old,
Such men are not forgot as soon as cold ;

Their fragrant mem'ry will outlast their tomb,
 Embalm'd for ever in its own perfume.
 And to say truth, though in its early prime,
 And when unstain'd with any grosser crime,
 Youth has a sprightliness and fire to boast,
 That in the valley of decline are lost,
 And Virtue with peculiar charms appears,
 Crown'd with the garland of life's blooming years;
 Yet Age, by long experience well inform'd,
 Well read, well temper'd, with religion warm'd,
 That fire abated, which impels rash Youth,
 Proud of his speed, to overshoot the truth,
 As time improves the grape's authentic juice,
 Mellows and makes the speech more fit for use,
 And claims a rev'rence in its short'ning day,
 That 'tis an honour and a joy to pay.
 The fruits of Age, less fair, are yet more sound,
 Than those a brighter season pours around;
 And, like the stores autumnal suns mature,
 Through wintry rigours unimpair'd endure.

What is fanatic frenzy, scorn'd so much,
 And dreaded more than a contagious touch?
 I grant it dang'rous, and approve your fear,
 That fire is catching if you draw too near;
 But sage observers oft mistake the flame,
 And give true piety that odious name.
 To tremble (as the creature of an hour
 Ought at the view of an almighty pow'r)
 Before his presence, at whose awful throne
 All tremble in all worlds, except our own,
 To supplicate his mercy, love his ways,
 And prize them above pleasure, wealth, or praise,
 Though common sense, allow'd a casting voice,
 And free from bias, must approve the choice,
 Convicts a man fanatic in th' extreme,
 And wild as madness in the world's esteem.
 But that disease, when soberly defin'd,
 Is the false fire of an o'erheated mind;
 It views the truth with a distorted eye,
 And either warps or lays it useless by;

'Tis narrow, selfish, arrogant, and draws
Its sordid nourishment from man's applause;
And while at heart sin unrelinquish'd lies,
Presumes itself chief fav'rite of the skies.

'Tis such a light as putrefaction breeds
In fly-blown flesh, whereon the maggot feeds,
Shines in the dark, but, usher'd into day,
The stench remains, the lustre dies away.

True bliss, if man may reach it, is compos'd
Of hearts in union mutually disclos'd;
And, farewell else all hope of pure delight,
Those hearts should be reclaim'd, renew'd, upright.
Bad men, profaning friendship's hallow'd name,
Form, in its stead, a covenant of shame,
A dark confed'racy against the laws
Of virtue, and religion's glorious cause:
They build each other up with dreadful skill,
As bastions set point blank against God's will;
Enlarge and fortify the dread redoubt,
Deeply resolv'd to shut a Saviour out;
Call legions up from hell to back the deed;
And, curs'd with conquest, finally succeed.
But souls, that carry on a blest exchange
Of joys, they meet with in their heav'nly range,
And with a fearless confidence make known
The sorrows, sympathy esteems its own,
Daily derive increasing light and force
From such communion in their pleasant course,
Feel less the journey's roughness and its length,
Meet their opposers with united strength,
And, one in heart, in int'rest, and design,
Gird up each other to the race divine.

But Conversation, choose what theme we may,
And chiefly when religion leads the way,
Should flow, like waters after summer show'rs,
Not as if rais'd by mere mechanic pow'rs.
The Christian, in whose soul, though now distress'd,
Lives the dear thought of joys he once possess'd,
When all his glowing language issu'd forth
With God's deep stamp upon its current worth,

Will speak without disguise, and must impart,
Sad as it is, his undisassembling heart,
Abhors constraint, and dares not feign a zeal,
Or seem to boast a fire he does not feel.
The song of Zion is a tasteless thing,
Unless, when rising on a joyful wing,
The soul can mix with the celestial bands,
And give the strain the compass it demands.

Strange tidings these to tell a world, who treat
All but their own experience as deceit !
Will they believe, though credulous enough
To swallow much upon much weaker proof,
That there are blest inhabitants of earth,
Partakers of a new ethereal birth,
Their hopes, desires, and purposes estrang'd
From things terrestrial, and divinely chang'd,
Their very language, of a kind, that speaks
The soul's sure int'rest in the good she seeks,
Who deal with Scripture, its importance felt,
As Tully with philosophy once dealt,
And in the silent watches of the night,
And through the scenes of toil-renewing light,
The social walk, or solitary ride,
Keep still the dear companion at their side ?
No—shame upon a self-disgracing age,
God's work may serve an ape upon a stage
With such a jest, as fill'd with hellish glee
Certain invisibles as shrewd as he ;
But veneration or respect finds none,
Save from the subjects of that work alone.
The World grown old her deep discernment shows,
Claps spectacles on her sagacious nose,
Peruses closely the true Christian's face,
And finds it a mere mask of sly grimace ;
Usurps God's office, lays his bosom bare,
And finds hypocrisy close lurking there ;
And, serving God herself through mere constraint,
Concludes his unfeign'd love of him a feint.
And yet, God knows, look human nature through,
(And in due time the World shall know it too)

That since the flow'rs of Eden felt the blast,
That after man's defection laid all waste,
Sincerity tow'rd's the heart-searching God
Has made the new-born creature her abode,
Nor shall be found in unregen'rate souls,
Till the last fire burn all between the poles.
Sincerity ! why 'tis his only pride,
Weak and imperfect in all grace beside,
He knows that God demands his heart entire,
And gives him all his just demands require.
Without it his pretensions were as vain,
As having it he deems the World's disdain ;
That great defect would cost him not alone
Man's favourable judgment, but his own ;
His birthright shaken, and no longer clear,
Than while his conduct proves his heart sincere.
Retort the charge, and let the World be told
She boasts a confidence she does not hold ;
That, conscious of her crimes, she feels instead
A cold misgiving, and a killing dread :
That while in health the ground of her support
Is madly to forget that life is short ;
That sick she trembles, knowing she must die,
Her hope presumption, and her faith a lie ;
That while she dotes, and dreams that she believes,
She mocks her Maker, and herself deceives,
Her utmost reach, historical assent,
The doctrines warp'd to what they never meant ;
That truth itself is in her head as dull
And useless as a candle in a skull,
And all her love of God a groundless claim,
A trick upon the canvass, painted flame.
Tell her again, the sneer upon her face,
And all her censures of the work of grace,
Are insincere, meant only to conceal
A dread she would not, yet is forc'd to feel ;
That in her heart the Christian she reveres,
And while she seems to scorn him, only fears.
A poet does not work by square or line,
As smiths and joiners perfect a design ;

At least we moderns, our attention less,
Beyond th' example of our sires digress,
And claim a right to scamper and run wide,
Wherever chance, caprice, or fancy guide.
The World and I fortuitously met ;
I ow'd a trifle, and have paid the debt ;
She did me wrong, I recompens'd the deed,
And, having struck the balance, now proceed.
Perhaps, however, as some years have pass'd,
Since she and I convers'd together last,
And I have liv'd recluse in rural shades,
Which seldom a distinct report pervades,
Great changes and new manners have occur'd,
And blest reforms, that I have never heard,
And she may now be as discreet and wise,
As once absurd in all discerning eyes.
Sobriety perhaps may now be found,
Where once Intoxication press'd the ground ;
The subtle and injurious may be just,
And he grown chaste, that was the slave of lust ;
Arts once esteem'd may be with shame dismiss'd ;
Charity may relax the miser's fist ;
The gamester may have cast his cards away,
Forgot to curse, and only kneel to pray.
It has indeed been told me (with what weight,
How credibly, 'tis hard for me to state)
That fables old, that seem'd for ever mute,
Reviv'd are hast'ning into fresh repute,
And gods and goddesses, discarded long
Like useless lumber, or a stroller's song,
Are bringing into vogue their heathen train,
And Jupiter bids fair to rule again ;
That certain feasts are instituted now,
Where Venus hears the lover's tender vow ;
That all Olympus through the country roves,
To consecrate our few remaining groves,
And Echo learns politely to repeat
The praise of names for ages obsolete :
That having prov'd the weakness, it should seem,
Of revelation's ineffectual beam,

To bring the passions under sober sway,
And give the moral springs their proper play,
They mean to try what may at last be done,
By stout substantial gods of wood and stone,
And whether Roman rites may not produce
The virtues of old Rome for English use.
May much success attend the pious plan,
May Mercury once more embellish man,
Grace him again with long-forgotten arts,
Reclaim his taste, and brighten up his parts,
Make him athletic, as in days of old,
Learn'd at the bar, in the palaestra bold,
Divest the rougher sex of female airs,
And teach the softer not to copy theirs :
The change shall please, nor shall it matter aught
Who works the wonder, if it be but wrought.
'Tis time, however, if the case stands thus,
For us plain folks, and all who side with us,
To build our altar, confident and bold,
And say as stern Elijah said of old,
The strife now stands upon a fair award,
If Israel's Lord be God, then serve the Lord :
If he be silent, faith is all a whim,
Then Baal is the God, and worship him.

Digression is so much in modern use,
Thought is so rare, and fancy so profuse,
Some never seem so wide of their intent,
As when returning to the theme they meant ;
As mendicants, whose business is to roam,
Make ev'ry parish but their own their home.
Though such continual zigzags in a book,
Such drunken reelings have an awkward look,
And I had rather creep to what is true,
Than rove and stagger with no mark in view ;
Yet to consult a little, seem'd no crime,
The freakish humour of the present time :
But now to gather up what seems dispers'd,
And touch the subject I design'd at first,
May prove, though much beside the rules of art,
Best for the public, and my wisest part.

And first, let no man charge me, that I mean
To close in sables ev'ry social scene,
And give good company a face severe,
As if they met around a father's bier ;
For tell some men, that pleasure all their bent,
And laughter all their work, is life misspent,
Their wisdom bursts into this sage reply,
Then mirth is sin, and we should always cry.
To find the medium asks some share of wit,
And therefore 'tis a mark fools never hit.
But though life's valley be a vale of tears,
A brighter scene beyond that vale appears,
Whose glory, with a light that never fades,
Shoots between scatter'd rocks and op'ning shades,
And, while it shows the land the soul desires,
The language of the land she seeks inspires.
Thus touch'd, the tongue receives a sacred cure
Of all that was absurd, profane, impure ;
Held within modest bounds, the tide of speech
Pursues the course that Truth and Nature teach ;
No longer labours merely to produce
The pomp of sound, or tinkle without use :
Where'er it winds, the salutary stream,
Sprightly and fresh, enriches ev'ry theme,
While all the happy man possess'd before,
The gift of nature, or the classic store,
Is made subservient to the grand design,
For which Heav'n form'd the faculty divine,
So, should an idiot, while at large he strays,
Find the sweet lyre, on which an artist plays,
With rash and awkward force the chords he shakes,
And grins with wonder at the jar he makes ;
But let the wise and well-instructed hand
Once take the shell beneath his just command,
In gentle sounds it seems as it complain'd
Of the rude injuries it late sustain'd,
Till tun'd at length to some immortal song,
It sounds Jehovah's name, and pours his praise along

RETIREMENT.

. *studii florens ignobilis oti.*
Virg. Geor. lib. 4.

HACKNEY'D in business, wearied at the oar,
 Which thousands, once fast chain'd to, quit no more,
 But which, when life at ebb runs weak and low,
 All wish, or seem to wish, they could forego;
 The statesman, lawyer, merchant, man of trade,
 Pants for the refuge of some rural shade,
 Where, all his long anxieties forgot
 Amid the charms of a sequester'd spot,
 Or recollected only to gild o'er,
 And add a smile to what was sweet before,
 He may possess the joys he thinks he sees,
 Lay his old age upon the lap of Ease,
 Improve the remnant of his wasted span,
 And, having liv'd a trifler, die a man.
 Thus Conscience pleads her cause within the breast,
 Though long rebell'd against, not yet suppress'd,
 And calls a creature form'd for God alone,
 For Heav'n's high purposes, and not his own,
 Calls him away from selfish ends and aims,
 From what debilitates and what inflames,
 From cities humming with a restless crowd,
 Sordid as active, ignorant as loud,
 Whose highest praise is that they live in vain,
 The dupes of pleasure, or the slaves of gain,
 Where works of man are cluster'd close around,
 And works of God are hardly to be found,
 To regions where, in spite of sin and wo,
 Traces of Eden are still seen below,
 Where mountain, river, forest, field, and grove,
 Remind him of his Maker's pow'r and love.
 'Tis well if, look'd for at so late a day,
 In the last scene of such a senseless play,

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True wisdom will attend his feeble call,
 And grace his action ere the curtain fall.
 Souls, that have long despis'd their heav'nly birth,
 Their wishes all impregnated with earth,
 For threescore years employ'd with ceaseless care
 In catching smoke and feeding upon air,
 Conversant only with the ways of men,
 Rarely redeem the short remaining ten.
 Invet'rate habits choke th' unfruitful heart,
 Their fibres penetrate its tend'rest part,
 And, draining its nutritious pow'rs to feed
 Their noxious growth, starve ev'ry better seed.

Happy, if full of days—but happier far,
 If, ere we yet discern life's ev'ning star,
 Sick of the service of a world, that feeds
 Its patient drudges with dry chaff and weeds,
 We can escape from Custom's idiot sway,
 To serve the Sov'reign we were born t' obey.
 Then sweet to muse upon his skill display'd
 (Infinite skill) in all that he has made !
 To trace in Nature's most minute design
 The signature and stamp of pow'r divine,
 Contrivance intricate, express'd with ease,
 Where unassisted sight no beauty sees,
 The shapely limb and lubricated joint
 Within the small dimensions of a point,
 Muscle and nerve miraculously spun,
 His mighty work, who speaks, and it is done,
 Th' invisible in things scarce seen reveal'd,
 To whom an atom is an ample field ;
 To wonder at a thousand insect forms,
 These hatch'd, and those resuscitated worms,
 New life ordain'd and brighter scenes to share,
 Once prone on earth, now buoyant upon air,
 Whose shape would make them, had they bulk and size,
 More hideous foes than fancy can devise ;
 With helmed heads and dragon-scales adorn'd,
 The mighty myriads now securely scorn'd,
 Would mock the majesty of man's high birth,
 Despise his bulwarks, and unpeople earth.

Then with a glance of fancy to survey,
Far as the faculty can stretch away,
Ten thousand rivers pour'd at his command
From urns, that never fail, through ev'ry land ;
These like a deluge with impetuous force,
Those winding modestly a silent course ;
The cloud-surmounting Alps, the fruitful vales ;
Seas, on which ev'ry nation spreads her sails ;
The sun, a world whence other worlds drink light,
The crescent moon, the diadem of night ;
Stars countless, each in his appointed place,
Fast anchor'd in the deep abyss of space—
At such a sight to catch the poet's flame,
And with a rapture like his own exclaim,
These are thy glorious works, thou Source of Good,
How dimly seen, how faintly understood !
Thine, and upheld by thy paternal care,
This universal frame, thus wondrous fair ;
Thy pow'r divine, and bounty beyond thought,
Ador'd and prais'd in all that thou hast wrought.
Absorb'd in that immensity I see,
I shrink abas'd, and yet aspire to thee ;
Instruct me, guide me to that heav'nly day,
Thy words more clearly than thy works display,
That, while thy truths my grosser thoughts refine,
I may resemble thee, and call thee mine.

O blest proficiency ! surpassing all,
That men erroneously their glory call,
The recompense that arts or arms can yield,
The bar, the senate, or the tented field.
Compar'd with this sublimest life below,
Ye kings and rulers, what have courts to show ?
Thus studied, us'd and consecrated thus,
Whatever is, seems form'd indeed for us :
Not as the plaything of a froward child,
Fretful unless diverted and beguil'd,
Much less to feed and fan the fatal fires
Of pride, ambition, or impure desires,
But as a scale, by which the soul ascends
From mighty means to more important ends,

Securely, though by steps but rarely trod,
Mounts from inferior beings up to God,
And sees, by no fallacious light or dim,
Earth made for man, and man himself for him.

Not that I mean t' approve, or would enforce,
A superstitious and monastic course :
Truth is not local, God alike pervades
And fills the world of traffic and the shades,
And may be fear'd amid the busiest scenes,
Or scorn'd where business never intervenes.
But 'tis not easy with a mind like ours,
Conscious of weakness in its noblest pow'rs,
And in a world where, other ills apart,
The roving eye misleads the careless heart,
To limit Thought, by nature prone to stray
Wherever freakish Fancy points the way ;
To bid the pleadings of Self-love be still,
Resign our own and seek our Maker's will ;
To spread the page of Scripture, and compare
Our conduct with the laws engraven there ;
To measure all that passes in the breast,
Faithfully, fairly, by that sacred test ;
To dive into the secret deeps within,
To spare no passion and no fav'rite sin,
And search the themes, important above all,
Ourselves, and our recovery from our fall.
But leisure, silence, and a mind releas'd
From anxious thoughts how wealth may be increas'd,
How to secure, in some propitious hour,
The point of int'rest, or the post of pow'r,
A soul serene, and equally retir'd
From objects too much dreaded or desir'd,
Safe from the clamours of perverse dispute,
At least are friendly to the great pursuit.

Op'ning the map of God's extensive plan,
We find a little isle, this life of man ;
Eternity's unknown expanse appears
Circling around and limiting his years.
The busy race examine and explore
Each creek and cavern of the dang'rous shore,

With care collect what in their eyes exceeds,
Some shining pebbles, and some weeds and shells ;
Thus laden, dream that they are rich and great,
And happiest he that groans beneath his weight.
The waves o'ertake them in their serious play,
And ev'ry hour sweep multitudes away ;
They shriek and sink, survivors start and weep,
Pursue their sport, and follow to the deep.
A few forsake the throng ; with lifted eyes
Ask wealth of Heav'n, and gain a real prize,
Truth, wisdom, grace, and peace like that above,
Seal'd with his signet whom they serve and love ;
Scorn'd by the rest, with patient hope they wait
A kind release from their imperfect state,
And unregretted are soon snatch'd away
From scenes of sorrow into glorious day.

Nor these alone prefer a life recluse,
Who seek retirement for its proper use ;
The love of change, that lives in ev'ry breast,
Genius and temper, and desire of rest,
Discordant motives in one centre meet,
And each inclines its vot'ry to retreat.
Some minds by nature are averse to noise,
And hate the tumult half the world enjoys,
The lure of av'rice, or the pompous prize,
That courts display before ambitious eyes ;
The fruits that hang on pleasure's flow'ry stem,
Whate'er enchants them, are no snares to them.
To them the deep recess of dusky groves,
Or forest, where the deer securely roves,
The fall of waters, and the song of birds,
And hills that echo to the distant herds,
Are luxuries excelling all the glare
The world can boast, and her chief fav'rites share.
With eager step, and carelessly array'd,
For such a cause the poet seeks the shade,
From all he sees he catches new delight,
Pleas'd Fancy claps her pinions at the sight,
The rising or the setting orb of day,
The clouds that fit, or slowly float away,

Nature in all the various shapes she wears,
Frowning in storms, or breathing gentle airs ;
The snowy robe her wintry state assumes,
Her summer heats, her fruits, and her perfumes ;
All, all alike transport the glowing bard,
Success in rhyme his glory and reward.

O Nature ! whose Elysian scenes disclose
His bright perfections, at whose word they rose,
Next to that pow'r, who form'd thee and sustains,
Be thou the great inspirer of my strains.
Still, as I touch the lyre, do thou expand
Thy genuine charms, and guide an artless hand,
That I may catch a fire but rarely known,
Give useful light, though I should miss renown,
And, poring on thy page, whose ev'ry line
Bears proofs of an intelligence divine,
May feel a heart enrich'd by what it pays,
That builds its glory on its Maker's praise.
Wo to the man, whose wit disclaims its use,
Glitt'ring in vain, or only to seduce,
Who studies nature with a wanton eye,
Admires the work, but slips the lesson by ;
His hours of leisure and recess employs
In drawing pictures of forbidden joys,
Retires to blazon his own worthless name,
Or shoot the careless with a surer aim.

The lover too shuns business and alarms,
Tender idolater of absent charms.
Saints offer nothing in their warmest pray'rs,
That he devotes not with a zeal like theirs ;
'Tis consecration of his heart, soul, time,
And ev'ry thought that wanders is a crime.
In sighs he worships his supremely fair,
And weeps a sad libation in despair ;
Adores a creature, and, devout in vain,
Wins in return an answer of disdain.
As woodbine weds the plant within her reach,
Rough elm, or smooth-grain'd ash, or glossy beech,
In spiral rings ascends the trunk, and lays
Her golden tassels on the leafy sprays,

But does a mischief while she lends a grace,
Strait'ning its growth by such a strict embrace ;
So love, that clings around the noblest minds,
Forbids th' advancement of the soul he binds :
The suitor's air indeed he soon improves,
And forms it to the taste of her he loves,
Teaches his eyes a language, and no less
Refines his speech, and fashions his address ;
But farewell promises of happier fruits,
Manly designs, and learning's grave pursuits :
Girt with a chain he cannot wish to break,
His only bliss is sorrow for her sake ;
Who will may pant for glory, and excel,
Her smile his aim, all higher aims farewell !
Thyrsis, Alexis, or whatever name
May least offend against so pure a flame,
Though sage advice of friends the most sincere
Sounds harshly in so delicate an ear,
And lovers, of all creatures, tame or wild,
Can least brook management, however mild ;
Yet let a poet (poetry disarms
The fiercest animals with magic charms) ,
Risk an intrusion on thy pensive mood,
And woo and win thee to thy proper good.
Pastoral images and still retreats,
Umbrageous walks and solitary seats,
Sweet birds in concert with harmonious streams,
Soft airs, nocturnal vigils, and day dreams,
Are all enchantments in a case like thine,
Conspire against thy peace with one design,
Sooth thee to make thee but a surer prey,
And feed the fire that wastes thy pow'rs away.
Up—God has form'd thee with a wiser view,
Not to be led in chains, but to subdue ;
Calls thee to cope with enemies, and first
Points out a conflict with thyself, the worst.
Woman indeed, a gift he would bestow
When he design'd a Paradise below,
The richest earthly boon his hands afford,
Deserves to be belov'd, but not ador'd.

RETIREMENT.

Away quickly to more active scenes,
 And summer of truths that study gleams,
 And the warm, but with its wiser part,
 And give all things all their heart;
 And not here, nor is it thine,
 And not thine, prerogative divine
 And faithful HERBERT, whose skill
 And work it cannot well fulfil,
 And up to Nature's care,
 And the power into purer air
 And the corner—in this elbow'd above
 And the corner, and see a statue move:
 And the corner, and foot falling slow,
 And the corner, hand clasp'd below,
 And the corner, eye distress,
 And the corner, can alone express
 And the corner, now: this silent tongue
 And the corner, could rest or join the song,
 And the corner, could venture or commend,
 And the corner, of a drooping friend.
 And the corner, and its spart,
 And the corner, all short;
 And the corner, ever & secret sway,
 And the corner, are past away,
 And the corner, as persons,
 And the corner, with the view,
 And the corner, a shrouded pain,
 And the corner, she impresses in vain,
 And the corner, that must meet,
 And the corner, she receives the least:
 And the corner, demand the red
 And the corner, a promising God;
 And the corner, could spare,
 And the corner, Job prepare
 And the corner, that never seek
 And the corner, d' seek
 And the corner, and out
 And the corner, a tree,
 And the corner, of wire,
 And the corner, might inspire

Their sov'reign nostrum is a clumsy joke
On pangs enforc'd with God's severest stroke.
But with a soul, that ever felt the sting
Of sorrow, sorrow is a sacred thing :
Not to molest, or irritate, or raise
A laugh at his expense, is slender praise ;
He, that has not usurp'd the name of man,
Does all, and deems too little, all he can,
T' assuage the throbbings of the fester'd part,
And staunch the bleedings of a broken heart.
'Tis not, as heads that never ache suppose,
Forg'ry of fancy, and a dream of woes ;
Man is a harp, whose chords elude the sight,
Each yielding harmony dispos'd aright ;
The screws revers'd (a task which, if he please,
God in a moment executes with ease),
Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,
Lost, till he tune them, all their pow'r and use.
Then neither heathy wilds, nor scenes as fair
As ever recompens'd the peasant's care,
Nor soft declivities with tufted hills,
Nor view of waters turning busy mills,
Parks in which Art preceptress Nature weds,
Nor gardens interspers'd with flow'ry beds,
Nor gales, that catch the scent of blooming groves,
And waft it to the mourner as he roves,
Can call up life into his faded eye,
That passes all he sees unheeded by ;
No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels,
No cure for such, till God, who makes them, heals.
And thou, sad suff'rer under nameless ill,
That yields not to the touch of human skill,
Improve the kind occasion, understand
A Father's frown, and kiss his chast'ning hand.
To thee the dayspring, and the blaze of noon,
The purple ev'ning and resplendent moon,
The stars, that, sprinkl'd o'er the vault of night,
Seem drops descending in a show'r of light,
Shine not, or undesir'd and hated shine,
Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine :

Post away swiftly to more active scenes,
Collect the scatter'd truths that study gleans,
Mix with the world, but with its wiser part,
No longer give an image all thine heart ;
Its empire is not hers, nor is it thine,
'Tis God's just claim, prerogative divine.

Virtuous and faithful HEBERDEN, whose skill
Attempts no task it cannot well fulfil,
Gives melancholy up to Nature's care,
And sends the patient into purer air.
Look where he comes—in this embow'r'd alcove
Stand close conceal'd, and see a statue move :
Lips busy, and eyes fix'd, foot falling slow,
Arms hanging idly down, hands clasp'd below,
Interpret to the marking eye distress,
Such as its symptoms can alone express.
That tongue is silent now ; that silent tongue
Could argue once, could jest or join the song,
Could give advice, could censure or commend,
Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend.
Renounc'd alike its office and its sport,
Its brisker and its graver strains fall short ;
Both fail beneath a fever's secret sway,
And like a summer brook are past away.
This is a sight for Pity to peruse,
Till she resemble faintly what she views,
Till Sympathy contract a kindred pain,
Pierc'd with the woes that she laments in vain.
This, of all maladies that man infest,
Claims most compassion, and receives the least :
Job felt it, when he groan'd beneath the rod
And the barb'd arrows of a frowning God ;
And such emollients as his friends could spare,
Friends such as his for modern Jobs prepare.
Blest, rather curst, with hearts that never feel,
Kept snug in caskets of close-hammer'd steel,
With mouths made only to grin wide and eat,
And minds, that deem derided pain a treat,
With limbs of British oak, and nerves of wire,
And wit that puppet-prompters might inspire,

Their sov'reign nostrum is a clumsy joke
On pangs enforc'd with God's severest stroke.
But with a soul, that ever felt the sting
Of sorrow, sorrow is a sacred thing :
Not to molest, or irritate, or raise
A laugh at his expense, is slender praise ;
He, that has not usurp'd the name of man,
Does all, and deems too little, all he can,
T' assuage the throbbings of the fester'd part,
And staunch the bleedings of a broken heart.
'Tis not, as heads that never ache suppose,
Forg'ry of fancy, and a dream of woes ;
Man is a harp, whose chords elude the sight,
Each yielding harmony dispos'd aright ;
The screws revers'd (a task which, if he please,
God in a moment executes with ease),
Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,
Lost, till he tune them, all their pow'r and use.
Then neither heathy wilds, nor scenes as fair
As ever recompens'd the peasant's care,
Nor soft declivities with tufted hills,
Nor view of waters turning busy mills,
Parks in which Art preceptress Nature weds,
Nor gardens interspers'd with flow'ry beds,
Nor gales, that catch the scent of blooming groves,
And waft it to the mourner as he roves,
Can call up life into his faded eye,
That passes all he sees unheeded by ;
No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels,
No cure for such, till God, who makes them, heals.
And thou, sad suff'rer under nameless ill,
That yields not to the touch of human skill,
Improve the kind occasion, understand
A Father's frown, and kiss his chast'ning hand.
To thee the dayspring, and the blaze of noon,
The purple ev'ning and resplendent moon,
The stars, that, sprinkl'd o'er the vault of night,
Seem drops descending in a show'r of light,
Shine not, or undesir'd and hated shine,
Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine :

Yet seek him, in his favour life is found,
 All bliss beside a shadow or a sound :
 Then heav'n, eclipse'd so long, and this dull earth,
 Shall seem to start into a second birth ;
 Nature, assuming a more lovely face,
 Borr'wing a beauty from the works of grace,
 Shall be despis'd and overlook'd no more,
 Shall fill thee with delight unfelt before,
 Impart to things inanimate a voice,
 And bid her mountains and her hills rejoice ;
 The sound shall run along the winding vales,
 And thou enjoy an Eden ere it fails.

Ye groves (the statesman at his desk exclaims,
 Sick of a thousand disappointed aims),
 My patrimonial treasure and my pride,
 Beneath your shades your gray possessor hide,
 Receive me languishing for that repose
 The servant of the public never knows.
 Ye saw me once (ah, those regretted days,
 When boyish innocence was all my praise !)
 Hour after hour delightfully allot
 To studies then familiar, since forgot,
 And cultivate a taste for ancient song,
 Catching its ardour as I mus'd along ;
 Nor seldom, as propitious Heav'n might send,
 What once I valu'd and could boast, a friend,
 Were witnesses how cordially I press'd
 His undissembling virtue to my breast ;
 Receive me now, not incorrupt as then,
 Nor guiltless of corrupting other men,
 But vers'd in arts, that, while they seem to stay
 A falling empire, hasten its decay.
 To the fair haven of my native home,
 The wreck of what I was, fatigued I come ;
 For once I can approve the patriot's voice,
 And make the course he recommends my choice :
 We meet at last in one sincere desire,
 His wish and mine both prompt me to retire.
 'Tis done—he steps into the welcome chaise,
 Lolls at his ease behind four handsome bays,

That whirl away from business and debate
The disencumber'd Atlas of the state.
Ask not the boy, who, when the breeze of morn
First shakes the glitt'ring drops from ev'ry thorn,
Unfolds his flock, then under bank or bush
Sits linking cherry-stones, or platting rush,
How fair is Freedom?—he was always free :
To carve his rustic name upon a tree,
To snare the mole, or with ill-fashion'd hook
To draw th' incautious minnow from the brook,
Are life's prime pleasures in his simple view,
His flock the chief concern he ever knew ;
She shines but little in his heedless eyes,
The good we never miss we rarely prize :
But ask the noble drudge in state affairs,
Escap'd from office and its constant cares,
What charms he sees in Freedom's smile express'd,
In Freedom lost so long, now repossess'd ;
The tongue, whose strains were cogent as commands,
Rever'd at home, and felt in foreign lands,
Shall own itself a stammerer in that cause,
Or plead its silence as its best applause.
He knows indeed that whether dress'd or rude,
Wild without art or artfully subdued,
Nature in ev'ry form inspires delight,
But never mark'd her with so just a sight.
Her hedge-row shrubs, a variegated store,
With woodbine and wild roses mantled o'er,
Green balks and furrow'd lands, the stream, that spreads
Its cooling vapour o'er the dewy meads,
Downs, that almost escape th' inquiring eye,
That melt and fade into the distant sky,
Beauties he lately alighted as he pass'd,
Seem all created since he travell'd last.
Master of all th' enjoyments he design'd,
No rough annoyance rankling in his mind,
What early philosophic hours he keeps,
How regular his meals, how sound he sleeps !
Not sounder he, that on the mainmast head,
While morning kindles with a windy red,

Begins a long look-out for distant land,
Nor quits till ev'ning watch his giddy stand,
Then swift descending with a seaman's haste,
Slips to his hammock, and forgets the blast.
He chooses company, but not the squire's,
Whose wit is rudeness, whose good-breeding tires ;
Nor yet the parson's, who would gladly come,
Obsequious when abroad, though proud at home ;
Nor can he much affect the neighb'ring peer,
Whose toe of emulation treads too near ;
But wisely seeks a more convenient friend,
With whom, dismissing forms, he may unbend !
A man, whom marks of condescending grace
Teach, while they flatter him, his proper place ;
Who comes when call'd, and at a word withdraws,
Speaks with reserve, and listens with applause ;
Some plain mechanic, who, without pretence
To birth or wit, nor gives nor takes offence ;
On whom he rests well-pleas'd his weary pow'rs,
And talks and laughs away his vacant hours.
The tide of life, swift always in its course,
May run in cities with a brisker force,
But no where with a current so serene,
Or half so clear, as in the rural scene.
Yet how fallacious is all earthly bliss,
What obvious truths the wisest heads may miss ;
Some pleasures live a month, and some a year,
But short the date of all we gather here ;
No happiness is felt, except the true,
That does not charm the more for being new.
This observation, as it chanc'd, not made,
Or, if the thought occur'd, not duly weigh'd,
He sighs—for after all by slow degrees
The spot he lov'd has lost the pow'r to please ;
To cross his ambling pony day by day,
Seems at the best but dreaming life away ;
The prospect, such as might enchant despair,
He views it not, or sees no beauty there ;
With aching heart, and discontented looks,
Returns at noon to billiards or to books,

But feels, while grasping at his faded joys,
 A secret thirst of his renounc'd employa.
 He chides the tardiness of ev'ry post,
 Pants to be told of battles won or lost,
 Blames his own indolence, observes, though late,
 'Tis criminal to leave a sinking state,
 Flies to the levee, and, receiv'd with grace,
 Kneels, kisses hands, and shines again in place.

Suburban villas, highway-side retreats,
 That dread th' encroachment of our growing streets,
 Tight boxes neatly sash'd, and in a blaze
 With all a July sun's collected rays,
 Delight the citizen, who, gasping there,
 Breathes clouds of dust, and calls it country air.
 O sweet retirement, who would balk the thought,
 That could afford retirement, or could not ?
 'Tis such an easy walk, so smooth and straight,
 The second milestone fronts the garden gate ;
 A step if fair, and, if a show'r approach,
 You find safe shelter in the next stage-coach.
 There, prison'd in a parlour snug and small,
 Like bottled wasps upon a southern wall,
 The man of business and his friends compress'd
 Forget their labours, and yet find no rest ;
 But still 'tis rural—trees are to be seen
 From ev'ry window, and the fields are green ;
 Ducks paddle in the pond before the door,
 And what could a remoter scene show more !
 A sense of elegance we rarely find
 The portion of a mean or vulgar mind.
 And ignorance of better things makes man,
 Who cannot much, rejoice in what he can ;
 And he, that deems his leisure well bestow'd
 In contemplation of a turnpike-road,
 Is occupied as well, employs his hours
 As wisely, and as much improves his pow'rs,
 As he, that slumbers in pavilions grac'd
 With all the charms of an accomplish'd taste.
 Yet hence, alas ! insolvencies ; and hence
 Th' unpitied victim of ill-judg'd expense.

From all his wearisome engagements freed,
Shakes hands with business, and retires indeed.

Your prudent grand-mammas, ye modern belles,
Content with Bristol, Bath, and Tunbridge-wells,
When health requir'd it would consent to roam,
Else more attach'd to pleasures found at home.
But now alike, gay widow, virgin, wife,
Ingenious to diversify dull life,
In coaches, chaises, caravans, and hoys,
Fly to the coast for daily, nightly joys ;
And all, impatient of dry land, agree
With one consent to rush into the sea.—
Ocean exhibits, fathomless and broad,
Much of the pow'r and majesty of God.
He swathes about the swelling of the deep,
That shines and rests, as infants smile and sleep ;
Vast as it is, it answers as it flows
The breathings of the lightest air that blows ;
Curling and whit'ning over all the waste,
The rising waves obey th' increasing blast,
Abrupt and horrid as the tempest roars,
Thunder and flash upon the stedfast shores,
Till he, that rides the whirlwind, checks the rein,
Then all the world of waters sleeps again.—
Nereids or Dryads, as the fashion leads,
Now in the floods, now panting in the meads,
Vot'ries of Pleasure still, where'er she dwells,
Near barren rocks, in palaces, or cells,
O grant a poet leave to recommend
(A poet fond of Nature, and your friend)
Her slighted works to your admiring view ;
Her works must needs excel, who fashion'd you.
Would ye, when rambling in your morning ride,
With some unmeaning coxcomb at your side,
Condemn the prattler for his idle pains,
To waste unheard the music of his strains,
And, deaf to all th' impertinence of tongue,
That, while it courts, affronts and does you wrong,
Mark well the finish'd plan without a fault,
The seas globose and huge, th' o'erarching vault,

Earth's millions daily fed, a world employ'd
In gath'ring plenty yet to be enjoy'd,
Till gratitude grew vocal in the praise
Of God, beneficent in all his ways ;
Grac'd with such wisdom, how would beauty shine !
Ye want but that to seem indeed divine.

Anticipated rents, and bills unpaid,
Force many a shining youth into the shade,
Not to redeem his time, but his estate,
And play the fool, but at a cheaper rate.
There, hid in loath'd obscurity, remov'd
From pleasures left, but never more belov'd,
He just endures, and with a sickly spleen
Sighs o'er the beauties of the charming scene.
Nature indeed looks prettily in rhyme ;
Streams tinkle sweetly in poetic chime :
The warblings of the blackbird, clear and strong,
Are musical enough in Thomson's song ;
And Cobham's groves, and Windsor's green retreats,
When Pope describes them, have a thousand sweets ;
He likes the country, but in truth must own
Most likes it, when he studies it in town.

Poor Jack—no matter who—for when I blame
I pity, and must therefore sink the name,
Liv'd in his saddle, lov'd the chase, the course,
And always, ere he mounted, kiss'd his horse.
Th' estate, his sires had own'd in ancient years,
Was quickly distanc'd, match'd against a peer's.
Jack vanish'd, was regretted and forgot ;
'Tis wild good-nature's never-failing lot.
At length, when all had long suppos'd him dead,
By cold submersion, razor, rope, or lead,
My lord, alighting at his usual place,
The Crown, took notice of an ostler's face.
Jack knew his friend, but hop'd in that disguise
He might escape the most observing eyes,
And whistling, as if unconcern'd and gay,
Curried his nag, and look'd another way.
Convinc'd at last, upon a nearer view,
'Twas he, the same, the very Jack he kne w,

O'erwhelm'd at once with wonder, grief, and joy,
 He press'd him much to quit his base employ ;
 His countenance, his purse, his heart, his hand,
 Influence and pow'r, were all at his command :
 Peers are not always gen'rous as well-bred,
 But Granby was, meant truly what he said.
 Jack bow'd, and was oblig'd—confess'd 'twas strange,
 That so retir'd he should not wish a change,
 But knew no medium between guzzling beer,
 And his old stint—three thousand pounds a-year.

Thus some retire to nourish hopeless wo ;
 Some seeking happiness not found below ;
 Some to comply with humour, and a mind
 To social scenes by nature disinclin'd ;
 Some sway'd by fashion, some by deep disgust ;
 Some self-impov'rish'd, and because they must ;
 But few, that court Retirement, are aware
 Of half the toils they must encounter there.

Lucrative offices are seldom lost
 For want of pow'rs proportion'd to the post :
 Give e'en a dunce th' employment he desires,
 And he soon finds the talents it requires ;
 A business with an income at its heels
 Furnishes always oil for its own wheels.
 But in his arduous enterprise to close
 His active years with indolent repose,
 He finds the labours of that state exceed
 His utmost faculties, severe indeed.
 'Tis easy to resign a toilsome place,
 But not to manage leisure with a grace ;
 Absence of occupation is not rest,
 A mind quite vacant is a mind distress'd.
 The vet'ran steed, excus'd his task at length,
 In kind compassion of his failing strength,
 And turn'd into the park or mead to graze,
 Exempt from future service all his days,
 There feels a pleasure perfect in its kind,
 Ranges at liberty, and snuffs the wind :
 But when his lord would quit the busy road,
 To taste a joy like that he has bestow'd,

He proves, less happy than his favour'd brute,
A life of ease a difficult pursuit.
Thought, to the man that never thinks, may seem
As natural as when asleep to dream ;
But reveries (for human minds will act)
Specious in show, impossible in fact,
Those flimsy webs, that break as soon as wrought,
Attain not to the dignity of thought :
Nor yet the swarms, that occupy the brain,
Where dreams of dress, intrigue, and pleasure reign ;
Nor such as useless conversation breeds,
Or lust engenders, and indulgence feeds.
Whence, and what are we ? to what end ordain'd ?
What means the drama by the world sustain'd ?
Business or vain amusement, care or mirth,
Divide the frail inhabitants of earth.
Is duty a mere sport, or an employ ?
Life an intrusted talent, or a toy ?
Is there, as reason, conscience, Scripture, say,
Cause to provide for a great future day,
When, earth's assign'd duration at an end,
Man shall be summon'd and the dead attend ?
The trumpet—will it sound, the curtain rise,
And show th' august tribunal of the skies ;
Where no prevarications shall avail,
Where eloquence and artifice shall fail,
The pride of arrogant distinctions fall,
And conscience and our conduct judge us all ?
Pardon me, ye that give the midnight oil
To learned cares, or philosophic toil,
Though I revere your honourable names,
Your useful labours and important aims,
And hold the world indebted to your aid,
Enrich'd with the discov'ries ye have made ;
Yet let me stand excus'd, if I esteem
A mind employ'd on so sublime a theme,
Pushing her bold inquiry to the date
And outline of the present transient state,
And, after poising her advent'rous wings,
Settling at last upon eternal things,

Far more intelligent, and better taught
The strenuous use of profitable thought,
Than ye, when happiest, and enlighten'd most,
And highest in renown, can justly boast.

A mind unnerv'd, or indispos'd to bear
The weight of subjects worthiest of her care,
Whatever hopes a change of scene inspires,
Must change her nature, or in vain retires.
An idler is a watch, that wants both hands,
As useless if it goes, as when it stands.
Books therefore, not the scandal of the shelves,
In which lewd sensualists print out themselves ;
Nor those, in which the stage gives vice a blow,
With what success let modern manners show ;
Nor his, who, for the bane of thousands born,
Built God a church, and laugh'd his word to scorn,
Skilful alike to seem devout and just,
And stab religion with a sly side-thrust ;
Nor those of learn'd philologists, who chase
A panting syllable through time and space,
Start it at home, and hunt it in the dark,
To Gaul, to Greece, and into Noah's ark ;
But such as Learning without false pretence,
The friend of Truth, th' associate of sound Sense,
And such as, in the zeal of good design,
Strong judgment lab'ring in the Scripture mine,
All such as manly and great souls produce,
Worthy to live, and of eternal use :
Behold in these what leisure hours demand,
Amusement and true knowledge hand in hand.
Luxury gives the mind a childish cast,
And, while she polishes, perverts the taste ;
Habits of close attention, thinking heads,
Become more rare as dissipation spreads,
Till authors hear at length one gen'ral cry,—
Tickle and entertain us, or we die.
The loud demand, from year to year the same,
Beggars Invention, and makes Fancy lame ;
Till Farce itself, most mournfully jejune,
Calls for the kind assistance of a tune ,

And novels (witness ev'ry month's review)
Belie their name, and offer nothing new.
The mind, relaxing into needful sport,
Should turn to writers of an abler sort,
Whose wit well manag'd, and whose classic style,
Give truth a lustre, and make wisdom smile.
Friends (for I cannot stint, as some have done,
Too rigid in my view, that name to one ;
Though one, I grant it, in the gen'rous breast
Will stand advanc'd a step above the rest :
Flow'rs by that name promiscuously we call,
But one, the rose, the regent of them all)—
Friends, not adopted with a schoolboy's haste,
But chosen with a nice discerning taste,
Well-born, well-disciplin'd, who, plac'd apart
From vulgar minds, have honour much at heart,
And, though the world may think th' ingredients odd,
The love of virtue, and the fear of God !
Such friends prevent what else would soon succeed,
A temper rustic as the life we lead,
And keep the polish of the manners clean
As theirs who bustle in the busiest scene ;
For solitude, however some may rave,
Seeming a sanctuary, proves a grave,
A sepulchre in which the living lie,
Where all good qualities grow sick and die.
I praise the Frenchman*, his remark was shrewd—
How sweet, how passing sweet, is solitude !
But grant me still a friend in my retreat,
Whom I may whisper—solitude is sweet.
Yet neither these delights, nor aught beside,
That appetite can ask, or wealth provide,
Can save us always from a tedious day,
Or shine the dulness of still life away :
Divine communion, carefully enjoy'd,
Or sought with energy, must fill the void.
O sacred art, to which alone life owes
Its happiest seasons, and a peaceful close,

* Bruyere.

Scorn'd in a world, indebted to that scorn
For evils daily felt and hardly borne,
Not knowing thee, we reap with bleeding hands
Flow'rs of rank odour upon thorny lands,
And, while Experience cautions us in vain,
Grasp seeming happiness, and find it pain.
Despondence, self-deserted in her grief,
Lost by abandoning her own relief,
Murmuring and ungrateful Discontent,
That scorns afflictions mercifully meant,
Those humours, tart as wines upon the fret,
Which idleness and weariness beget ;
These, and a thousand plagues, that haunt the breast,
Fond of the phantom of an earthly rest,
Divine communion chases, as the day
Drives to their dens th' obedient beasts of prey.
See Judah's promis'd king, bereft of all,
Driv'n out an exile from the face of Saul,
To distant caves the lonely wand'rer flies,
To seek that peace a tyrant's frown denies.
Hear the sweet accents of his tuneful voice,
Hear him, o'erwhelm'd with sorrow, yet rejoice ;
No womanish or wailing grief has part,
No, not a moment, in his royal heart ;
'Tis manly music, such as martyrs make,
Suff'ring with gladness for a Saviour's sake ;
His soul exults, hope animates his lays,
The sense of mercy kindles into praise,
And wilds, familiar with the lion's roar,
Ring with ecstatic sounds unheard before :
'Tis love like his, that can alone defeat
The foes of man, or make a desert sweet.

Religion does not censure or exclude
Unnumber'd pleasures harmlessly pursued ;
To study culture, and with artful toil
To meliorate and tame the stubborn soil ;
To give dissimilar yet fruitful lands
The grain, or herb, or plant that each demands ;
To cherish virtue in an humble state,
And share the joys your bounty may create ;

To mark the matchless workings of the pow'r
That shuts within its seed the future flow'r,
Bids these in elegance of form excel,
In colour these, and those delight the smell,
Sends Nature forth the daughter of the skies,
To dance on earth, and charm all human eyes ;
To teach the canvass innocent deceit,
Or lay the landscape on the snowy sheet—
These, these are arts pursued without a crime,
That leave no stain upon the wing of Time.

Me poetry (or rather notes that aim
Feebly and vainly at poetic fame)
Employs, shut out from more important views,
Fast by the banks of the slow winding Ouse ;
Content if thus sequester'd I may raise
A monitor's though not a poet's praise,
And while I teach an art too little known,
To close life wisely, may not waste my own.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE history of the following production is briefly this : A lady, fond of blank verse, demanded a poem of that kind from the author, and gave him the *SOFA* for a subject. He obeyed ; and, having much leisure, connected another subject with it ; and pursuing the train of thought to which his situation and turn of mind led him, brought forth at length, instead of the trifle which he at first intended, a serious affair—a Volume.

In the Poem on the subject of Education, he would be very sorry to stand suspected of having aimed his censure at any particular school. His objections are such, as naturally apply themselves to schools in general. If there were not, as for the most part there is, wilful neglect in those who manage them, and an omission even of such discipline as they are susceptible of, the objects are yet too numerous for minute attention ; and the aching hearts of ten thousand parents, mourning under the bitterest of all disappointments, attest the truth of the allegation. His quarrel, therefore, is with the mischief at large, and not with any particular instance of it.

THE TASK.

BOOK I.

THE SOFA.

Argument of the First Book.

Historical deduction of seats, from the stool to the Sofa.—A Schoolboy's ramble.—A walk in the country.—The scenes described.—Rural sounds as well as sights delightful.—Another walk.—Mistake concerning the charms of solitude corrected.—Colonnades commended.—Alcove, and the view from it.—The wilderness.—The grove.—The thresher.—The necessity and the benefits of exercise.—The works of nature superior to, and in some instances imitable by, art.—The wearisomeness of what is commonly called a life of pleasure.—Change of scene sometimes expedient.—A common described, and the character of crazy Kate introduced upon it.—Gipsies.—The blessings of civilized life.—The state most favourable to virtue.—The South Sea Islanders compassionated, but chiefly Omai.—His present state of mind supposed.—Civilized life friendly to virtue, but not great cities.—Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their due praise, but censured.—Fete champetre.—The book concludes with a reflection on the fatal effects of dissipation and effeminacy upon our public measures.

I SING the *Sofa*. I, who lately sang
Truth, Hope, and Charity*, and touch'd with awe
The solemn chords, and with a trembling hand,
Escap'd with pain from that advent'rous flight,
Now seek repose upon an humbler theme ;
The theme though humble, yet august and proud
Th' occasion—for the Fair commands the song.

Time was, when clothing sumptuous or for use,
Save their own painted skins, our sires had none.
As yet black breeches were not ; satin smooth,
Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile :
The hardy chief upon the rugged rock
Wash'd by the sea, or on the grav'ly bank
Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,
Fearless of wrong, repos'd his weary'd strength.
Those barb'rous ages past, succeeded next

* See Poems, pages 125, 169, 183

The birth-day of Invention ; weak at first,
 Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.
 Joint-stools were then created ; on three legs
 Upborne they stood. Three legs upholding firm
 A massy slab, in fashion square or round.
 On such a stool immortal Alfred sat,
 And sway'd the sceptre of his infant realms :
 And such in ancient halls and mansions drear
 May still be seen ; but perforated sore,
 And drill'd in holes, the solid oak is found,
 By worms voracious eaten through and through.

At length a generation more refin'd
 Improv'd the simple plan ; made three legs four,
 Gave them a twisted form vermicular,
 And o'er the seat, with plenteous wadding stuff'd,
 Induc'd a splendid cover, green and blue,
 Yellow and red, of tapestry richly wrought
 And woven close, or needlework sublime.
 There might ye see the piony spread wide,
 The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,
 Lapdog and lambkin with black staring eyes,
 And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.

Now came the cane from India, smooth and bright
 With Nature's varnish ; sever'd into stripes ;
 That interlac'd each other, these supplied
 Of texture firm a lattice-work, that brac'd
 The new machine, and it became a chair.
 But restless was the chair ; the back erect
 Distress'd the weary loins, that felt no ease ;
 The slipp'ry seat betray'd the sliding part,
 That press'd it, and the feet hung dangling down,
 Anxious in vain to find the distant floor.
 These for the rich ; the rest, whom Fate had plac'd
 In modest mediocrity, content
 With base materials, sat on well-tann'd hides,
 Obdurate and unyielding, glassy smooth,
 With here and there a tuft of crimson yarn,
 Or scarlet crewel, in the cushion fix'd,
 If cushion might be call'd, what harder seem'd
 Than the firm oak, of which the frame was form'd.

No want of timber then was felt or fear'd
 In Albion's happy isle. The lumber stood
 Pond'rous and fix'd by its own heavy weight.
 But elbows still were wanting : three, some say,
 An alderman of Gnipplagate contriv'd ;
 And some ascribe th' invention to a priest,
 Burly, and big, and studious of his ease.
 But rude at first, and not with easy slope
 Receding wide, they press'd against the ribs,
 And bruise'd the side ; and, elevated high,
 Taught the rais'd shoulders to invade the ease.
 Long time elaps'd ere e'er our ragged sires
 Complain'd, though inconveniently pent in,
 And ill at ease behind. The ladies first
 'Gan murmur, as because the softer sex.
 Ingenious Fancy, never better pleas'd,
 Than when employ'd to accommodate the fair,
 Heard the sweet mean with pity, and devis'd
 The soft settee ; one elbow at each end,
 And in the midst an elbow it receiv'd,
 United yet divided, twain at once.
 So sit two kings of Brentford on one throne ;
 And so two citizens, who take the air,
 Close pack'd, and smiling in a chain and one.
 But relaxation of the languid frame,
 By soft recumbency of outstretch'd limbs,
 Was bliss reserv'd for happier days. So slow
 The growth of what is excellent ; so hard
 To attain perfection in this nether world.
 Thus first Necessity invented stools,
 Convenience next suggested elbow chairs,
 And Luxury th' accomplish'd Sofa last.

The nurse sleeps sweetly, hir'd to watch the sick,
 Whom snoring she disturbs. As sweetly he,
 Who quits the coach-box at the midnight hour,
 To sleep within the carriage more secure,
 His legs depending at the open door.
 Sweet sleep enjoys the curate in his dock,
 The tedious rector drawing o'er his head ;
 And sweet the clerk below. But neither sleep

Of lazy nurse, who snores the sick man dead ;
Nor his, who quits the box at midnight hour,
To slumber in the carriage more secure ;
Nor sleep enjoy'd by curate in his desk ;
Nor yet the dozings of the clerk, are sweet,
Compar'd with the repose the *Sofa* yields.

O may I live exempted (while I live
Guiltless of pamper'd appetite obscene)
From pangs arthritic, that infest the toe
Of libertine Excess. The *Sofa* suits
The gouty limb, 'tis true ; but gouty limb,
Though on a *Sofa*, may I never feel :
For I have lov'd the rural walk through lanes
Of grassy swarth, close cropp'd by nibbling sheep,
And skirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs ; have lov'd the rural walk
O'er hills, through valleys, and by rivers' brink,
E'er since a truant boy I pass'd my bounds,
T' enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames ;
And still remember, nor without regret
Of hours, that sorrow since has much endear'd,
How oft, my slice of pocket store consum'd,
Still hung'ring, penniless, and far from home,
I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws,
Or blushing crabs, or berries, that emboss
The bramble, black as jet, or sloes austere.
Hard fare ! but such as boyish appetite
Disdains not ; nor the palate, undepav'd
By culinary arts, unsav'ry deems.
No *Sofa* then awaited my return ;
Nor *Sofa* then I needed. Youth repairs
His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil
Incurring short fatigue ; and, though our years,
As life declines, speed rapidly away,
And not a year but pilfers as he goes
Some youthful grace, that age would gladly keep ;
A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees
Their length and colour from the locks they spare ;
Th' elastic spring of an unwearied foot,
That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence, .

That play of lungs, inhaling and again
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes
Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,
Mine have not pilfer'd yet, nor yet impair'd
My relish of fair prospect ; scenes that sooth'd
Or charm'd me young, no longer young, I find
Still soothing, and of pow'r to charm me still.
And witness, dear companion of my walks,
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
Fast lock'd in mine, with pleasure such as love,
Confirm'd by long experience of thy worth
And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire—
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.
Thou know'st my praise of nature most sincere,
And that my raptures are not conjur'd up
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.
How oft upon yon eminence our pace
Has slacken'd to a pause, and we have borne
The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,
While Admiration, feeding at the eye,
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.
Thence with what pleasure have we just discern'd
The distant plough slow moving, and beside
His lab'ring team, that swerv'd not from the track,
The sturdy swain diminish'd to a boy !
Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
Conducts the eye along his sinuous course
Delighted. There, fast rooted in his bank,
Stand, never overlook'd, our fav'rite elms,
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut ;
While far beyond, and overthwart the stream,
That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,
The sloping land recedes into the clouds ;
Displaying on its varied side the grace
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tow'r,
Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
Just undulates upon the list'ning ear,
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages remote.

Scenes must be beautiful, which daily view'd
 Please daily, and whose novelty survives
 Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years :
 Praise justly due to those that I describe.

Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds,
 Exhilarate the spirit, and restore
 The tone of languid Nature. Mighty winds,
 That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood
 Of ancient growth, make music not unlike
 The dash of Ocean on his winding shore,
 And hush the spirit while they fill the mind ;
 Unnumber'd branches waving in the blast,
 And all their leaves fast flut'ring, all at once.
 Nor less composure waits upon the roar
 Of distant floods, or on the softer voice
 Of neighb'ring fountain, or of rills that slip
 Through the cleft rock, and, chiming as they fall
 Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length
 In matted grass, that with a livelier green
 Betrays the secret of their silent course.
 Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,
 But animated Nature sweeter still,
 To sooth and satisfy the human ear.
 Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one
 The livelong night ; nor these alone, whose notes
 Nice-finger'd Art must emulate in vain,
 But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime
 In still repeated circles, screaming loud,
 The jay, the pie, and e'en the boding owl,
 That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.
 Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,
 Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns,
 And only there, please highly for their sake.

Peace to the artist whose ingenious thought
 Devis'd the weather-house, that useful toy !
 Fearless of humid air and gath'ring rains,
 Forth steps the man—an emblem of myself !
 More delicate his tim'rous mate retires.
 When Winter soaks the fields, and female feet,
 Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,

Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,
 The task of new discov'ries falls on me.
 At such a season, and with such a charge,
 Once went I forth ; and found, till then unknown,
 A cottage, whither oft we since repair :
 'Tis perch'd upon the green hill top, but close
 Environ'd with a ring of branching elms,
 That overhang the thatch, itself unseen
 Peeps at the vale below ; so thick beset
 With foliage of such dark redundant growth,
 I call'd the low-roof'd lodge the *peasant's nest*.
 And, hidden as it is, and far remote
 From such unpleasing sounds, as haunt the ear
 In village or in town, the bay of curs
 Incessant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels,
 And infants clam'rous, whether pleas'd or pain'd,
 Oft have I wish'd the peaceful covert mine.
 Here, I have said, at least I should possess
 The poet's treasure, silence, and indulge
 The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure.
 Vain thought ! the dweller in that still retreat
 Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.
 Its elevated site forbids the wretch
 To drink sweet waters of the crystal well ;
 He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,
 And, heavy laden, brings his bev'rage home,
 Far fetch'd and little worth ; nor seldom waits,
 Dependent on the baker's punctual call,
 To hear his creaking panniers at the door,
 Angry and sad, and his last crust consum'd.
 So farewell envy of the *peasant's nest* !
 If solitude make scant the means of life,
 Society for me !—thou seeming sweet,
 Be still a pleasing object in my view ;
 My visit still, but never mine abode.

Not distant far, a length of colonnade
 Invites us. Monument of ancient taste,
 Now scorn'd, but worthy of a better fate.
 Our fathers knew the value of a screen
 From sultry suns : and, in their shaded walks

And long protracted bow'rs, enjoy'd at noon
 The gloom and coolness of declining day.
 We bear our shades about us ; self-depriv'd
 Of other screen, the thin umbrella spread,
 And range an Indian waste without a tree.
 Thanks to Benevolus*—he spares me yet
 These cheasnats rang'd in corresponding lines ;
 And, though himself so polish'd, still reprieves
 The obsolete prolixity of shade.

Descending now (but cautious, lest too fast)
 A sudden steep, upon a rustic bridge
 We pass a gulf, in which the willows dip
 Their pendent boughs, stooping as if to drink.
 Hence, ancle deep in moss and flow'ry thyme,
 We mount again, and feel at ev'ry step
 Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,
 Rais'd by the mole, the miner of the soil.
 He, not unlike the great ones of mankind,
 Disfigures Earth : and, plotting in the dark,
 Toils much to earn a monumental pile,
 That may record the mischiefs he has done.

The summit gain'd, behold the proud alcove
 That crowns it ! yet not all its pride secures
 The grand retreat from injuries impress'd
 By rural carvers, who with knives deface
 The pannels, leaving an obscure, rude name,
 In characters uncouth, and spelt amiss.
 So strong the zeal t' immortalize himself
 Beats in the breast of man, that e'en a few,
 Few transient years, won from th' abyss abhorr'd
 Of blank oblivion, seem a glorious prize,
 And even to a clown. Now roves the eye ;
 And, posted on this speculative height,
 Exults in its command. The sheepfold here
 Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.
 At first, progressive as a stream, they seek
 The middle field ; but, scatter'd by degrees,
 Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.
 There from the sun-burnt hayfield homeward creeps

* John Courtney Throckmorton, Esq. of Weston Underwood.

The loaded wain ; while, lighten'd of its charge,
 The wain that meets it passes swiftly by ;
 The boorish driver leaning o'er his team
 Vociferous, and impatient of delay.
 Nor less attractive is the woodland scene,
 Diversified with trees of ev'ry growth,
 Alike, yet various. Here the gray smooth trunks
 Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine
 Within the twilight of their distant shades ;
 There, lost behind a rising ground, the wood
 Seems sunk, and shorten'd to its topmost boughs.
 No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
 Though each its hue peculiar ; paler some,
 And of a wannish gray ; the willow such,
 And poplar, that with silver lines his leaf,
 And ash far-stretching his umbrageous arm ;
 Of deeper green the elm ; and deeper still,
 Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak.
 Some glossy-leav'd, and shining in the sun,
 The maple, and the beech of oily nuts
 Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve
 Diffusing odours ; nor unnoted pass
 The sycamore, capricious in attire,
 Now green, now tawny, and ere autumn yet
 Have chang'd the woods, in scarlet honours bright.
 O'er these, but far beyond (a spacious map
 Of hill and valley interpos'd between),
 The Ouse, dividing the well-water'd land,
 Now glitters in the sun, and now retires,
 As bashful, yet impatient to be seen.

Hence the declivity is sharp and short,
 And such the re-ascent ; between them weeps
 A little naiad her improv'ish'd urn
 All summer long, which winter fills again.
 The folded gates would bar my progress now,
 But that the lord* of this enclos'd demesne,
 Communicative of the good he owns,
 Admits me to a share ; the guiltless eye
 Commits no wrong, nor wastes what it enjoys.

* See the foregoing note.

Refreshing change ! where now the blazing sun ?
By short transition we have lost his glare,
And stepp'd at once into a cooler clime.
Ye fallen avenues ! once more I mourn
Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice
That yet a remnant of your race survives.
How airy and how light the graceful arch,
Yet awful as the consecrated roof
Re-echoing pious anthems ! while beneath
The checker'd earth seems restless as a flood
Brush'd by the wind. So sportive is the light
Shot through the boughs, it dances as they dance.
Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,
And dark'ning and enlight'ning, as the leaves
Play wanton, ev'ry moment, ev'ry spot.

And now, with nerves new-brac'd and spirits cheer'd,
We tread the wilderness, whose well-roll'd walks,
With curvature of slow and easy sweep—
Deception innocent—give ample space
To narrow bounds. The grove receives us next ;
Between the upright shafts of whose tall elms
We may discern the thresher at his task.
Thump after thump resounds the constant flail,
That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls
Full on the destin'd ear. Wide flies the chaff,
The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist
Of atoms, sparkling in the noonday beam.
Come hither, ye that press your beds of down,
And sleep not ; see him sweating o'er his bread
Before he eats it. 'Tis the primal curse,
But soften'd into mercy ; made the pledge
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.

By ceaseless action all that is subsists.
Constant rotation of th' unwearied wheel,
That Nature rides upon, maintains her health,
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads
An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves.
Its own revolvency upholds the world.
Winds from all quarters agitate the air,
And fit the limpid element for use,

Else noxious ; oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams,
 All feel the fresh'ning impulse, and are cleans'd
 By restless undulation : e'en the oak
 Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm :
 He seems indeed indignant, and to feel
 Th' impression of the blast with proud disdain,
 Frowning, as if in his unconscious arm
 He held the thunder : but the monarch owes
 His firm stability to what he scorns,
 More fix'd below, the more disturb'd above.
 The law, by which all creatures else are bound,
 Binds man, the lord of all. Himself derives
 No mean advantage from a kindred cause,
 From strenuous toil his hours of sweetest ease.
 The sedentary stretch their lazy length
 When Custom bids, but no refreshment find,
 For none they need : the languid eye, the cheek
 Deserted of its bloom, the flaccid, shrunk,
 And wither'd muscle, and the vapid soul,
 Reproach their owner with that love of rest,
 To which he forfeits e'en the rest he loves.
 Not such th' alert and active. Measure life
 By its true worth, the comforts it affords,
 And theirs alone seems worthy of the name.
 Good health, and, its associate in the most,
 Good temper ; spirits prompt to undertake,
 And not soon spent, though in an arduous task ;
 The pow'rs of fancy and strong thought are theirs ;
 E'en age itself seems privileg'd in them
 With clear exemption from its own defects.
 A sparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front
 The vet'ran shows, and, gracing a gray beard
 With youthful smiles, descends towards the grave
 Sprightly and old almost without decay.

Like a coy maiden, Ease, when courted most,
 Farthest retires—an idol, at whose shrine
 Who oft'nest sacrifice are favour'd least.
 The love of Nature, and the scenes she draws,
 Is Nature's dictate. Strange ! there should be found
 Who, self-imprison'd in their proud saloons,

Renounce the odours of the open field
For the unscented fictions of the loom ;
Who, satisfied with only pencill'd scenes,
Prefer to the performance of a God
Th' inferior wonders of an artist's hand !
Lovely indeed the mimic works of Art ;
But Nature's works far lovelier. I admire,
None more admires, the painter's magic skill,
Who shows me that which I shall never see,
Conveys a distant country into mine,
And throws Italian light on English walls :
But imitative strokes can do no more
Than please the eye—sweet Nature ev'ry sense.
The air salubrious of her lofty hills,
The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,
And music of her woods—no works of man
May rival these, these all bespeak a pow'r
Peculiar, and exclusively her own.
Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast ;
'Tis free to all—'tis ev'ry day renew'd ;
Who scorns it starves deservedly at home.
He does not scorn it, who, imprison'd long
In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey
To sallow sickness, which the vapours, dank
And clammy, of his dark abode have bred,
Escapes at last to liberty and light :
His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue ;
His eye relumines its extinguish'd fires ;
He walks, he leaps, he runs—is wing'd with joy,
And riots in the sweets of ev'ry breeze.
He does not scorn it, who has long endur'd
A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.
Nor yet the mariner, his blood inflam'd
With acrid salts : his very heart athirst,
To gaze at Nature in her green array,
Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possess'd
With visions prompted by intense desire :
Fair fields appear below, such as he left
Far distant, such as he would die to find—
He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more.

The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns ;
The low'ring eye, the petulance, the frown,
And sullen sadness, that o'ershade, distort,
And mar the face of beauty, when no cause
For such immeasurable woe appears,
These Flora banishes, and gives the fair
Sweet smiles, and bloom less transient than her own.
It is the constant revolution, stale
And tasteless, of the same repeated joys,
That palls and satiates, and makes languid life
A pedlar's pack, that bows the bearer down.
Health suffers, and the spirits ebb, the heart
Recoils from its own choice—at the full feast
Is famish'd—finds no music in the song,
No smartness in the jest ; and wonders why.
Yet thousands still desire to journey on,
Though halt, and weary of the path they tread.
The paralytic, who can hold her cards,
But cannot play them, borrows a friend's hand
To deal and shuffle, to divide and sort
Her mingled suits and sequences ; and sits,
Spectatress both and spectacle, a sad
And silent cipher, while her proxy plays.
Others are dragg'd into the crowded room
Between supporters ; and, once seated, sit,
Through downright inability to rise,
Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again.
These speak a loud memento. Yet e'en these
Themselves love life, and cling to it, as he,
That overhangs a torrent, to a twig.
They love it, and yet loath it ; fear to die,
Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.
Then wherefore not renounce them ? No—the dread,
The slavish dread of solitude, that breeds
Reflection and remorse, the fear of shame,
And their invet'rate habits, all forbid.

Whom call we gay ? That honour has been long
The boast of mere pretenders to the name.
The innocent are gay—the lark is gay,
That dries his feathers, saturate with dew,

Beneath the rasy cloud, while yet the beams
 Of dayspring overshoot his humble nest.
 The peasant too, a witness of his song,
 Himself a songster, is as gay as he.
 But save me from the gaiety of those,
 Whose headaches nail them to a noonday bed;
 And save me too from theirs, whose haggard eyes
 Flash desperation, and betray their pangs
 For property stripp'd off by cruel chance;
 From gaiety, that fills the bones with pain,
 The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with wo.

The earth was made so various, that the mind
 Of desultory man, studious of change,
 And pleas'd with novelty, might be indulg'd.
 Prospects, however lovely, may be seen
 Till half their beauties fade; the weary sight,
 Too well acquainted with their smiles, slides off
 Fastidious, seeking less familiar scenes.
 Then snug enclosures in the shelter'd vale,
 Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,
 Delight us; happy to renounce a while,
 Not senseless of its charms, what still we love,
 That such short absence may endear it more.
 Then forests, or the savage rock, may please,
 That hides the sea-mew in his hollow clefts
 Above the reach of man. His hoary head,
 Conspicuous many a league, the mariner
 Bound homeward, and in hope already there,
 Greets with three cheers exulting. At his waist,
 A girdle of half-wither'd shrubs he shows,
 And at his feet the baffled billows die.
 The common, overgrown with fern, and rough
 With prickly gorse, that, shapeless and deform'd,
 And dang'rous to the touch, has yet its bloom,
 And decks itself with ornaments of gold,
 Yields no unpleasing ramble; there the turf
 Smells fresh, and, rich in odorif'rous herbs
 And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense
 With luxury of unexpected sweets.

There often wanders one, whom better days
 Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimm'd

With lace, and hat with splendid ribband bound.
 A serving maid was she, and fell in love
 With one who left her, went to sea, and died.
 Her fancy follow'd him through foaming waves
 To distant shores ; and she would sit and weep
 At what a sailor suffers ; fancy too,
 Delusive most where warmest wishes are,
 Would oft anticipate his glad return,
 And dream of transports she was not to know.
 She heard the doleful tidings of his death—
 And never smil'd again ! and now she roams
 The dreary waste ; there spends the livelong day,
 And there, unless when charity forbids,
 The livelong night. A tatter'd apron hides,
 Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides, a gown
 More tatter'd still ; and both but ill conceal
 A bosom heav'd with never ceasing sighs.
 She begs an idle pin of all she meets,
 And hoards them in her sleeve ; but needful food,
 Though press'd with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,
 Tho' pinch'd with cold, asks never.—Kate is craz'd.

I see a column of slow-rising smoke
 O'ertop the lofty wood that skirts the wild.
 A vagabond and useless tribe there eat
 Their miserable meal. A kettle, slung
 Between two poles upon a stick transverse,
 Receives the morsel—flesh obscene of dog,
 Or vermin, or at best of cock purloin'd
 From his accustom'd perch. Hard faring race !
 They pick their fuel out of ev'ry hedge,
 Which, kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquench'd
 The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide
 Their flutt'ring rags, and shows a tawny skin,
 The vellum of the pedigree they claim.
 Great skill have they in palmistry, and more
 To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
 Conveying worthless dross into its place ;
 Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.
 Strange ! that a creature rational, and cast
 In human mould, should brutalize by choice

His nature ; and, though capable of arts,
By which the world might profit, and himself,
Self-banish'd from society, prefer
Such squalid sloth to honourable toil !
Yet even these, though feigning sickness oft
They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb,
And vex their flesh with artificial sores,
Can change their whine into a mirthful note,
When safe occasion offers ; and with dance,
And music of the bladder and the bag,
Beguile their woes, and make the woods resound.
Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy
The houseless rovers of the sylvan world ;
And, breathing wholesome air, and wand'ring much,
Need other physic none to heal th' effects
Of loathsome diet, penury, and cold.

Blest he, though undistinguish'd from the crowd
By wealth or dignity, who dwells secure,
Where man, by nature fierce, has laid aside
His fierceness, having learnt, though slow to learn,
The manners and the arts of civil life.
His wants indeed are many ; but supply
Is obvious, plac'd within the easy reach
Of temp'rate wishes and industrious hands.
Here virtue thrives as in her proper soil ;
Not rude and surly, and beset with thorns,
And terrible to sight, as when she springs
(If e'er she spring spontaneous) in remote
And barb'rous climes, where violence prevails,
And strength is lord of all ; but gentle, kind,
By culture tam'd, by liberty refresh'd,
And all her fruits by radiant truth matur'd.
War and the chase engross the savage whole ;
War follow'd for revenge, or to supplant
The envied tenants of some happier spot :
The chase for sustenance, precarious trust !
His hard condition with severe constraint
Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth
Of wisdom, proves a school, in which he learns
Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate,

Mean self-attachment, and scarce aught beside.
 Thus fare the shiv'ring natives of the north,
 And thus the rangers of the western world,
 Where it advances far into the deep,
 Tow'rd's the antarctic. E'en the favour'd isles
 So lately found, although the constant sun
 Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,
 Can boast but little virtue ; and inert
 Through plenty, lose in morals what they gain
 In manners—victims of luxurious ease.
 These therefore I can pity, plac'd remote
 From all that science traces, art invents,
 Or inspiration teaches ; and enclos'd
 In boundless oceans, never to be pass'd
 By navigators uninform'd as they,
 Or plough'd perhaps by British bark again :
 But far beyond the rest, and with most cause,
 Thee, gentle savage !* whom no love of thee
 Or thine, but curiosity perhaps,
 Or else vain glory, prompted us to draw
 Forth from thy native bow'rs, to show thee here
 With what superior skill we can abuse
 The gifts of Providence, and squander life.
 The dream is past ; and thou hast found again
 Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams,
 And homestall thatch'd with leaves. But hast thou
 found
 Their former charms ? And, having seen our state,
 Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp
 Of equipage, our gardens, and our sports,
 And heard our music ; are thy simple friends,
 Thy simple fare, and all thy plain delights,
 As dear to thee as once ? And have thy joys
 Lost nothing by comparison with ours ?
 Rude as thou art (for we return'd thee rude
 And ignorant, except of outward show)
 I cannot think thee yet so dull of heart
 And spiritless, as never to regret
 Sweets tasted here, and left as soon as known.

* Omai.

Methinks I see thee straying on the beach,
And asking of the surge, that bathes thy foot,
If ever it has wash'd our distant shore.
I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears,
A patriot's for his country : thou art sad
At thought of her forlorn and abject state,
From which no pow'r of thine can raise her up.
Thus Fancy paints thee, and, though apt to err,
Perhaps errs little, when she paints thee thus.
She tells me too, that duly ev'ry morn
Thou climb'st the mountain top, with eager eye
Exploring far and wide the wat'ry waste
For sight of ship from England. Ev'ry speck
Seen in the dim horizon turns thee pale
With conflict of contending hopes and fears.
But comes at last the dull and dusky eve,
And sends thee to thy cabin, well prepar'd
To dream all night of what the day denied.
Alas ! expect it not. We found no bait
To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,
Disinterested good, is not our trade.
We travel far, 'tis true, but not for nought ;
And must be brib'd to compass Earth again
By other hopes and richer fruits than yours.

 But though true worth and virtue in the mild
And genial soil of cultivated life
Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there,
Yet not in cities oft : in proud, and gay,
And gain-devoted cities. Thither flow,
As to a common and most noisome sewer,
The dregs and feculence of ev'ry land.
In cities foul example on most minds
Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds,
In gross and pamper'd cities, sloth, and lust,
And wantonness, and gluttonous excess.
In cities vice is hidden with most ease,
Or seen with least reproach ; and virtue, taught
By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there
Beyond th' achievement of successful flight.
I do confess them nurs'ries of the arts,

In which they flourish most ; where, in the beams
Of warm encouragement, and in the eye
Of public note, they reach their perfect size.
Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaim'd
The fairest capital of all the world,
By riot and incontinence the worst.
There, touch'd by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes
A lucid mirror, in which Nature sees
All her reflected features. Bacon there
Gives more than female beauty to a stone,
And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.
Nor does the chisel occupy alone
The pow'rs of sculpture, but the style as much ;
Each province of her art her equal care.
With nice incision of her guided steel
She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a soil
So sterile with what charms soe'er she will,
The richest scen'ry and the loveliest forms.
Where finds Philosophy her eagle eye,
With which she gazes at yon burning disk
Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots ?
In London. Where her implements exact,
With which she calculates, computes, and scans,
All distance, motion, magnitude, and now
Measures an atom, and now girds a world ?
In London. Where has commerce such a mart,
So rich, so throng'd, so drain'd, and so supplied.
As London—opulent, enlarg'd, and still
Increasing, London ? Babylon of old
Not more the glory of the earth than she,
A more accomplish'd world's chief glory now.

She has her praise. Now mark a spot or two,
That so much beauty would do well to purge ;
And show this queen of cities, that so fair
May yet be foul ; so witty, yet not wise.
It is not seemly, nor of good report,
That she is slack in discipline ; more prompt
T' avenge than to prevent the breach of law :
That she is rigid in denouncing death
On petty rebbers, and indulges life

And liberty, and oftentimes honour too,
To peculators of the public gold :
That thieves at home must hang ; but he, that puts
Into his overgorg'd and bloated purse
The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.
Nor is it well, nor can it come to good,
That, through profane and infidel contempt
Of holy writ, she has presum'd t' annul
And abrogate, as roundly as she may,
The total ordinance and will of God ;
Advancing Fashion to the post of Truth,
And cent'ring all authority in modes
And customs of her own, till Sabbath rites
Have dwindled into unrespected forms,
And knees and hassocks are well-nigh divorc'd.

God made the country, and man made the town.
What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts
That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
That life holds out to all, should most abound
And least be threaten'd in the fields and groves ?
Possess ye therefore, ye who, borne about
In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue
But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
But such as art contrives, possess ye still
Your element ; there only can ye shine ;
There only minds like yours can do no harm.
Our groves were planted to console at noon
The pensive wand'rer in their shades. At eve
The moon-beam, sliding softly in between
The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,
Birds warbling all the music. We can spare
The splendour of your lamps ; they but eclipse
Our softer satellite. Your songs confound
Our more harmonious notes : the thrush departs
Scar'd, and th' offended nightingale is mute.
There is a public mischief in your mirth ;
It plagues your country. Folly such as yours,
Grac'd with a sword, and worthier of a fan,
Has made, which enemies could ne'er have done,
Our arch of empire, stedfast but for you,
A mutilated structure, soon to fall.

THE TASK.

BOOK II.

THE TIME-PIECE.

Argument of the Second Book.

Reflections suggested by the conclusion of the former book.—Peace among the nations recommended, on the ground of their common fellowship in sorrow.—Prodigies enumerated.—Sicilian earthquakes.—Man rendered obnoxious to these calamities by sin.—God the agent in them.—The philosophy that stops at secondary causes reproved.—Our own late miscarriages accounted for.—Satirical notice taken of our trips to Fontaine-Bleau.—But the pulpit, not satire, the proper engine of reformation.—The Reverend Advertiser of engraved sermons.—Petit-maitre person.—The good preacher.—Picture of a theatrical clerical coxcomb.—Story-tellers and jesters in the pulpit reproved.—Apostrophe to popular applause.—Retailers of ancient philosophy expostulated with.—Sum of the whole matter.—Effects of sacerdotal mismanagement on the laity.—Their folly and extravagance.—The mischiefs of profusion.—Profusion itself, with all its consequent evils, ascribed, as to its principal cause, to the want of discipline in the universities.

O FOR a lodge in some vast wilderness,
 Some boundless contiguity of shade,
 Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
 Of unsuccessful or successful war,
 Might never reach me more. My ear is pain'd,
 My soul is sick with ev'ry day's report
 Of wrong and outrage with which Earth is fill'd.
 There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
 It does not feel for man ; the nat'ral bond
 Of brotherhood is sever'd as the flax,
 That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
 He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
 Not colour'd like his own ; and having pow'r
 T' enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
 Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.
 Lands intersected by a narrow frith
 Abhor each other. Mountains interpos'd

Make enemies of nations, who had else
Like kindred drops been mingled into one.
Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys ;
And, worse than all, and most to be deplor'd
As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
With stripes, that Mercy with a bleeding heart
Weeps, when she sees inflicted on a beast.
Then what is man ? And what man, seeing this,
And having human feelings ; does not blush,
And hang his head, to think himself a man ?
I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.
No : dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Just estimation priz'd above all price,
I had much rather be myself the slave,
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.
We have no slaves at home—then why abroad ?
And they themselves once ferried o'er the wave
That parts us, are emancipate and loos'd.
Slaves cannot breathe in England ; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free ;
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
And let it circulate through ev'ry vein
Of all your empire ; that, where Britain's pow'r
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.

Sure there is need of social intercourse,
Benevolence, and peace, and mutual aid,
Between the nations in a world, that seems
To toll the deathbell of its own decease,
And by the voice of all its elements
To preach the gen'ral doom*. When were the winds
Let slip with such a warrant to destroy ?
When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap
Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry ?

* Alluding to the calamities in Jamaica.

Fires from beneath, and meteors* from above,
Portentous, unexampled, unexplain'd,
Have kindled beacons in the skies ; and th' old
And crazy Earth has had her shaking fits
More frequent, and foregone her usual rest.
Is it a time to wrangle, when the props
And pillars of our planet seem to fail,
And Nature† with a dim and sickly eye
To wait the close of all ? But grant her end
More distant, and that prophecy demands
A longer respite, unaccomplish'd yet ;
Still they are frowning signals, and bespeak
Displeasure in His breast, who smites the Earth
Or heals it, makes it languish or rejoice.
And 'tis but seemly, that, where all deserve
And stand expos'd by common peccaney
To what no few have felt, there should be peace,
And brethren in calamity should love.

Alas for Sicily ! rude fragments now
Lie scatter'd, where the shapely column stood.
Her palaces are dust. In all her streets
The voice of singing and the sprightly chord
Are silent. Revelry, and dance, and show,
Suffer a syncope and solemn pause ;
While God performs upon the trembling stage
Of his own works his dreadful part alone.
How does the Earth receive him ?—with what signs
Of gratulation and delight her king ?
Pours she not all her choicest fruits abroad,
Her sweetest flow'rs, her aromatic gums,
Disclosing Paradise where'er he treads ?
She quakes at his approach. Her hollow womb,
Conceiving thunders, through a thousand deeps
And fiery caverns, roars beneath his foot.
The hills move lightly, and the mountains smoke,
For he has touch'd them. From th' extremest point
Of elevation down into the abyss

* August 18, 1783.

† Alluding to the fog, that covered both Europe and Asia during the whole summer of 1783.

His wrath is busy, and his frown is felt.
The rocks fall headlong, and the valleys rise,
The rivers die into offensive pools,
And, charg'd with putrid verdure, breathe a gross
And mortal nuisance into all the air.
What solid was, by transformation strange,
Grows fluid ; and the fix'd and rooted earth,
Tormented into billows, heaves and swells,
Or with vortiginous and hideous whirl
Sucks down its prey insatiable. Immense
The tumult and the overthrow, the pangs
And agonies of human and of brute
Multitudes, fugitive on ev'ry side,
And fugitive in vain. The sylvan scene
Migrates uplifted ; and, with all its soil
Alighting in far distant fields, finds out
A new possessor, and survives the change.
Ocean has caught the frenzy, and, upwrought
To an enormous and o'erbearing height,
Not by a mighty wind, but by that voice,
Which winds and waves obey, invades the shore
Resistless. Never such a sudden flood,
Upridg'd so high, and sent on such a charge,
Possess'd an inland scene. Where now the throng
That press'd the beach, and, hasty to depart,
Look'd to the sea for safety ? They are gone,
Gone with the reflux wave into the deep—
A prince with half his people ! Ancient tow'rs,
And roofs embattled high, the gloomy scenes,
Where beauty oft and letter'd worth consume
Life in the unproductive shades of death,
Fall prone : the pale inhabitants come forth,
And, happy in their unforeseen release
From all the rigours of restraint, enjoy
The terrors of the day that sets them free.
Who then, that has thee, would not hold thee fast,
Freedom ? whom they that lose thee so regret,
That e'en a judgment, making way for thee,
Seems in their eyes a mercy for thy sake ?

Such evils Sin hath wrought ; and such a flame
Kindled in Heav'n, that it burns down to Earth,
And in the furious inquest, that it makes
On God's behalf, lays waste his fairest works.
The very elements, though each be meant
The minister of man, to serve his wants,
Conspire against him. With his breath he draws
A plague into his blood ; and cannot use
Life's necessary means, but he must die.
Storms rise t' o'erwhelm him : or, if stormy winds
Rise not, the waters of the deep shall rise,
And, needing none assistance of the storm,
Shall roll themselves ashore, and reach him there.
The earth shall shake him out of all his holds,
Or make his house his grave : nor so content,
Shall counterfeit the motions of the flood,
And drown him in her dry and dusty gulfs.
What then !—were they the wicked above all,
And we the righteous, whose fast-anchor'd isle
Mov'd not, while theirs was rock'd, like a light skiff,
The sport of ev'ry wave ? No : none are clear,
And none than we more guilty. But, where all
Stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts
Of wrath obnoxious, God may choose his mark :
May punish, if he please, the less, to warn
The more malignant. If he spar'd not them,
Tremble and be amaz'd at thine escape,
Far guiltier England, lest he spare not thee !

Happy the man, who sees a God employ'd
In all the good and ill, that checker life !
Resolving all events, with their effects
And manifold results, into the will
And arbitration wise of the Supreme.
Did not his eye rule all things, and intend
The least of our concerns (since from the least
The greatest oft originate) ; could chance
Find place in his dominion, or dispose
One lawless particle to thwart his plan ;
Then God might be surpris'd, and unforeseen
Contingence might alarm him, and disturb

The smooth and squat course of his affairs.
This truth Philosophy, though eagle-eyed
In nature's tendencies, oft overlooks ;
And, having found his instrument, forgets,
Or disregards, or, more presumptuous still,
Denies, the pow'r that wields it. God proclaims
His hot displeasure against foolish men,
That live an atheist life : involves the Heav'n
In tempests ; quits his grasp upon the winds,
And gives them all their fury ; bids a plague
Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin,
And putrefy the breath of blooming Health.
He calls for Famine, and the meagre fiend
Blows mildew from between his shrivell'd lips,
And taints the golden ear. He springs his mines,
And desolates a nation at a blast.
Forth steps the spruce philosopher, and tells
Of homogeneal and discordant springs
And principles ; of causes, how they work
By necessary laws their sure effects ;
Of action and reaction : he has found
The source of the disease, that nature feels,
And bids the world take heart and banish fear.
Thou fool ! will thy discov'ry of the cause
Suspend th' effect, or heal it ? Has not God
Still wrought by means since first he made the world ?
And did he not of old employ his means
To drown it ? What is his creation less
Than a capacious reservoir of means
Form'd for his use, and ready at his will ?
Go, dress thine eyes with eye-salve ; ask of him,
Or ask of whomsoever he has taught ;
And learn, though late, the genuine cause of all.
England, with all thy faults, I love thee still—
My country ! and, while yet a nook is left,
Where English minds and manners may be found,
Shall be constrain'd to love thee. Though thy clime
Be fickle, and thy year most part deform'd
With dripping rains, or wither'd by a frost,
I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies,

And fields without a flow'r, for warmer France
With all her vines : nor for Ausonia's groves
Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bow'rs.
To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime
Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire
Upon thy foes, was never meant my task :
But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake
Thy joys and sorrows, with as true a heart
As any thund'rer there. And I can feel
Thy follies too ; and with a just disdain
Frown at effeminate, whose very looks
Reflect dishonour on the land I love.
How, in the name of soldiership and sense,
Should England prosper, when such things, as smooth
And tender as a girl, all essenc'd o'er
With odours, and as profligate as sweet ;
Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,
And love when they should fight ; when such as these
Presume to lay their hand upon the ark
Of her magnificent and awful cause ?
Time was when it was praise and boast enough
In ev'ry clime, and travel where we might,
That we were born her children. Praise enough
To fill th' ambition of a private man,
That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,
And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.
Farewell those honours, and farewell with them
The hope of such hereafter ! They have fall'n
Each in his field of glory ; one in arms,
And one in council—Wolfe upon the lap
Of smiling Victory that moment won,
And Chatham heart-sick of his country's shame !
They made us many soldiers. Chatham, still
Consulting England's happiness at home,
Secur'd it by an unforgiving frown,
If any wrong'd her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,
Put so much of his heart into his act,
That his example had a magnet's force,
And all were swift to follow whom all lov'd.
Those suns are set. O rise some other such !

Or all that we have left is empty talk
Of old achievements, and despair of new.

Now hoist the sail, and let the streamers float
Upon the wanton breezes. Strew the deck
With lavender, and sprinkle liquid sweets,
That no rude savour maritime invade
The nose of nice nobility ! Breathe soft
Ye clarionets, and softer still ye flutes ;
That winds and waters, lull'd by magic sounds,
May bear us smoothly to the Gallic shore !
True, we have lost an empire—let it pass.
True ; we may thank the perfidy of France,
That pick'd the jewel out of England's crown,
With all the cunning of an envious shrew.
And let that pass—'twas but a trick of state !
A brave man knows no malice, but at once
Forgets in peace the injuries of war,
And gives his direst foe a friend's embrace.
And, sham'd as we have been, to th' very beard
Brav'd and defied, and in our own sea prov'd
Too weak for those decisive blows, that once
Ensur'd us mast'ry there, we yet retain
Some small pre-eminence ; we justly boast
At least superior jockeyship, and claim
The honours of the turf as all our own !
Go then, well worthy of the praise ye seek,
And show the shame, ye might conceal at home,
In foreign eyes !—be grooms and win the plate,
Where once your nobler fathers won a crown !—
'Tis gen'rous to communicate your skill
To those that need it. Folly is soon learn'd :
And under such preceptors who can fail !

There is a pleasure in poetic pains,
Which only poets know. The shifts and turns,
Th' expedients and inventions multiform,
To which the mind resorts, in chase of terms
Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win—
T' arrest the fleeting images, that fill
The mirror of the mind, and hold them fast,
And force them sit, till he has pencill'd off

A faithful likeness of the forms he views ;
Then to dispose his copies with such art,
That each may find its most propitious light,
And shine by situation, hardly less
Than by the labour and the skill it cost ;
Are occupations of the poet's mind
So pleasing, and that steal away the thought
With such address from themes of sad import,
That, lost in his own musings, happy man !
He feels th' anxieties of life, denied
Their wonted entertainment, all retire.
Such joys has he that sings. But ah ! not such,
Or seldom such, the hearers of his song.
Fastidious, or else listless, or perhaps
Aware of nothing arduous in a task
They never undertook, they little note
His dangers or escapes, and haply find
Their least amusement where he found the most.
But is amusement all ? Studious of song,
And yet ambitious not to sing in vain,
I would not trifle merely, though the world
Be loudest in their praise, who do no more.
Yet what can satire, whether grave or gay ?
It may correct a foible, may chastise
The freaks of fashion, regulate the dress,
Retrench a sword-blade, or displace a patch ;
But where are its sublimer trophies found ?
What vice has it subdued ? whose heart reclaim'd
By rigour, or whom laugh'd into reform ?
Alas ! Leviathan is not so tam'd :
Laugh'd at, he laughs again ; and stricken hard,
Turns to the stroke his adamantine scales,
That fear no discipline of human hands.

The pulpit, therefore (and I name it fill'd
With solemn awe, that bids me well beware
With what intent I touch that holy thing)—
The pulpit (when the sat'rist has at last,
Strutting and vap'ring in an empty school,
Spent all his force, and made no proselyte)—
I say the pulpit (in the sober use

Of its legitimate, peculiar pow'rs)
Must stand acknowledg'd, while the world shall stand,
The most important and effectual guard,
Support, and ornament of Virtue's cause.
There stands the messenger of truth : there stands
The legate of the skies !—His theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law speaks out
Its thunders ; and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.
He establishes the strong, restores the weak,
Reclaims the wand'rer, binds the broken heart,
And, arm'd himself in panoply complete
Of heav'nly temper, furnishes with arms
Bright as his own, and trains, by ev'ry rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect !
Are all such teachers ?—would to Heav'n all were !
But hark—the doctor's voice !—fast wedg'd between
Two empirics he stands, and with swoln cheeks
Inspires the news, his trumpet. Keener far
Than all invective is his bold harangue,
While through that public organ of report
He hails the clergy ; and, defying shame,
Announces to the world his own and theirs !
He teaches those to read, whom schools dismiss'd,
And colleges, untaught ; sells accent, tone,
And emphasis in score, and gives to pray'r
Th' *adagio* and *andante* it demands.
He grinds divinity of other days
Down into modern use ; transforms old print
To zigzag manuscript, and cheats the eyes
Of gall'ry critics by a thousand arts.
Are there who purchase of the doctor's ware ?
O, name it not in Gath !—it cannot be,
That grave and learned clerks should need such aid.
He doubtless is in sport, and does but droll,
Assuming thus a rank unknown before—
Grand caterer and dry-nurse of the church !

I venerate the man, whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life,
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest in the sacred cause.
To such I render more than mere respect,
Whose actions say, that they respect themselves.
But loose in morals, and in manners vain,
In conversation frivolous, in dress
Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse ;
Frequent in park with lady at his side,
Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes ;
But rare at home, and never at his books,
Or with his pen, save when he scrawls a card ;
Constant at routs, familiar with a round
Of ladyships, a stranger to the poor ;
Ambitious of preferment for its gold,
And well-prepar'd, by ignorance and sloth,
By infidelity and love of world,
To make God's work a sinecure ; a slave
To his own pleasures and his patron's pride ;
From such apostles, O ye mitred heads,
Preserve the church ! and lay not careless hands
On skulls, that cannot teach, and will not learn.

Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,
Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
His master-strokes, and draw from his design.
I would express him simple, grave, sincere ;
In doctrine uncorrupt ; in language plain,
And plain in manner ; decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture ; much impress'd
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too ; affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men.
Behold the picture !—Is it like ?—Like whom ?
The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,
And then skip down again ; pronounce a text ;
Cry—hem ! and reading what they never wrote

Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,
And with a well-bred whisper close the scene !

In man or woman, but far most in man,
And most of all in man that ministers
And serves the altar, in my soul I loathe
All affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn ;
Object of my implacable disgust.
What !—will a man play tricks, will he indulge
A silly fond conceit of his fair form
And just proportion, fashionable mien
And pretty face, in presence of his God ?
Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,
As with the diamond on his lily hand,
And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,
When I am hungry for the bread of life ?
He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and shames
His noble office, and, instead of truth,
Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock.
Therefore avaunt all attitude, and stare,
And start theatric, practis'd at the glass !
I seek divine simplicity in him,
Who handles things divine ; and all beside,
Though learn'd with labour, and tho' much admir'd
By curious eyes and judgments ill inform'd,
To me is odious as the nasal twang
Heard at conventicle, where worthy men,
Misled by custom, strain celestial themes
Through the press'd nostril, spectacle-bestrid.
Some decent in demeanour while they preach,
That task perform'd, relapse into themselves ;
And, having spoken wisely, at the close
Grow wanton, and give proof to ev'ry eye,
Whoe'er was edified, themselves were not !
Forth comes the pocket mirror.—First we stroke
An eyebrow ; next compose a straggling lock ;
Then with an air most gracefully perform'd
Fall back into our seat, extend an arm,
And lay it at its ease with gentle care,
With handkerchief in hand depending low ;
The better hand more busy gives the nose

Its bergamot, or aids th' indebted eye
 With op'ra glass, to watch the moving scene,
 And recognise the slow-retiring fair.—
 Now this is fulsome, and offends me more
 Than in a churchman slovenly neglect
 And rustic coarseness would. A heav'nly mind
 May be indiff'rent to her house of clay,
 And slight the hovel as beneath her care ;
 But how a body so fantastic, trim,
 And quaint, in its deportment and attire,
 Can lodge a heav'nly mind—demands a doubt.

He, that negotiates between God and man,
 As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
 Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
 Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful
 To court a grin, when you should woo a soul ;
 To break a jest, when pity would inspire
 Pathetic exhortation ; and t' address
 The skittish fancy with facetious tales,
 When sent with God's commission to the heart !
 So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip
 Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,
 And I consent you take it for your text,
 Your only one, till sides and benches fail.
 No : he was serious in a serious cause,
 And understood too well the weighty terms,
 That he had ta'en in charge. He would not stoop
 To conquer those by jocular exploits,
 Whom truth and soberness assail'd in vain.

O Popular Applause ! what heart of man
 Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms ?
 The wisest and the best feel urgent need
 Of all their caution in thy gentlest gales ;
 But swell'd into a gust—who then, alas !
 With all his canvass set, and inexpert,
 And therefore heedless, can withstand thy pow'r ?
 Praise from the rivell'd lips of toothless, bald
 Decrepitude, and in the looks of lean
 And craving Poverty, and in the bow
 Respectful of the smutch'd artificer,

Is oft too welcome, and may much disturb
 The bias of the purpose. How much more,
 Pour'd forth by beauty splendid and polite,
 In language soft as Adoration breathes ?
 Ah spare your idol ! think him human still.
 Charms he may have, but he has frailties too !
 Dote not too much, nor spoil what ye admire.

All truth is from the sempiternal source
 Of light divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome,
 Drew from the stream below. More favour'd we
 Drink, when we choose it, at the fountain-head.
 To them it flow'd much mingled and defil'd
 With hurtful error, prejudice, and dreams
 Illusive of philosophy, so call'd,
 But falsely. Sages after sages strove
 In vain to filter off a crystal draught
 Pure from the lees, which often more enhanc'd
 The thirst than slak'd it, and not seldom bred
 Intoxication and delirium wild.
 In vain they push'd inquiry to the birth
 And spring-time of the world ; ask'd, Whence is man ?
 Why form'd at all ? and wherefore as he is ?
 Where must he find his Maker ? with what rites
 Adore him ? Will he hear, accept, and bless ?
 Or does he sit regardless of his works ?
 Has man within him an immortal seed ?
 Or does the tomb take all ? If he survive
 His ashes, where ? and in what weal or woe ?
 Knots worthy of solution, which alone
 A Deity could solve. Their answers, vague
 And all at random, fabulous and dark,
 Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life,
 Defective and unsanction'd, prov'd too weak
 To bind the roving appetite, and lead
 Blind nature to a God not yet reveal'd.
 'Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts,
 Explains all mysteries except her own,
 And so illuminates the path of life,
 That fools discover it, and stray no more.
 Now tell me, dignified and sapient sir,

My man of morals, nurtur'd in the shades
Of Academus—is this false or true ?
Is Christ the abler teacher, or the schools ?
If Christ, then why resort at ev'ry turn
To Athens or to Rome, for wisdom short
Of man's occasions, when in him reside
Grace, knowledge, comfort—an unfathom'd store ?
How oft, when Paul has serv'd us with a text,
Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully, preach'd !
Men that, if now alive, would sit content
And humble learners of a Saviour's worth,
Preach it who might. Such was their love of truth,
Their thirst of knowledge, and their candour too !

And thus it is.—The pastor, either vain
By nature, or by flatt'ry made so, taught
To gaze at his own splendour, and t' exalt
Absurdly, not his office, but himself ;
Or unenlighten'd, and too proud to learn ;
Or vicious, and not therefore apt to teach ;
Perverting often by the stress of lewd
And loose example, whom he should instruct ;
Exposes, and holds up to broad disgrace,
The noblest function, and discredits much
The brightest truths that man has ever seen.
For ghostly counsel, if it either fall
Below the exigence, or be not back'd
With show of love, at least with hopeful proof
Of some sincerity on the giver's part ;
Or be dishonour'd in th' exterior form
And mode of its conveyance by such tricks
As move derision, or by foppish airs
And histrionic mumm'ry, that let down
The pulpit to the level of the stage ;
Drops from the lips a disregarded thing.
The weak perhaps are mov'd, but are not taught,
While prejudice in men of stronger minds
Takes deeper root, confirm'd by what they see.
A relaxation of religion's hold
Upon the roving and untutor'd heart
Soon follows, and, the curb of conscience snapp'd,

The laity run wild.—But do they now ?
Note their extravagance, and be convinc'd.

As nations, ignorant of God, contrive
A wooden one ; so we, no longer taught
By monitors that mother church supplies,
Now make our own. Posterity will ask
(If e'er posterity see verse of mine)
Some fifty or a hundred lustrums hence,
What was a monitor in George's days ?
My very gentle reader, yet unborn,
Of whom I needs must augur better things,
Since Heav'n would sure grow weary of a world
Productive only of a race like us
A monitor is wood—plank shaven thin.
We wear it at our backs. There, closely brac'd
And neatly fitted, it compresses hard
The prominent and most unsightly bones,
And binds the shoulders flat. We prove its use
Sov'reign and most effectual to secure
A form, not now gymnastic as of yore,
From rickets and distortion, else our lot.
But thus admonish'd, we can walk erect—
One proof at least of manhood ! while the friend
Sticks close, a Mentor worthy of his charge.
Our habits, costlier than Lucullus wore,
And by caprice as multiplied as his,
Just please us while the fashion is at full,
But change with ev'ry moon. The sycophant,
Who waits to dress us, arbitrates their date ;
Surveys his fair reversion with keen eye ;
Finds one ill made, another obsolete,
This fits not nicely, that is ill conceiv'd ;
And, making prize of all that he condemns,
With our expenditure defrays his own.
Variety's the very spice of life,
That gives it all its flavour. We have run
Through ev'ry change, that Fancy, at the loom
Exhausted, has had genius to supply ;
And, studious of mutation still, discard
A real elegance, a little us'd,

For monstrous novelty, and strange disguise.
We sacrifice to dress, till household joys
And comforts cease. Dress drains our cellar dry,
And keeps our larder lean ; puts out our fires ;
And introduces hunger, frost, and wo,
Where peace and hospitality might reign.
What man that lives, and that knows how to live,
Would fail t' exhibit at the public shows
A form as splendid as the proudest there,
Though appetite raise outcries at the cost ?
A man o' th' town dines late, but soon enough,
With reasonable forecast and despatch,
T' ensure a side-box station at half-price.
You think perhaps, so delicate his dress,
His daily fare as delicate. Alas !
He picks clean teeth, and, busy as he seems
With an old tavern quill, is hungry yet !
The route is Folly's circle, which she draws
With magic wand. So potent is the spell,
That none, decoy'd into that fatal ring,
Unless by Heav'n's peculiar grace, escape.
There we grow early gray, but never wise ;
There form connexions, but acquire no friend ;
Solicit pleasure hopeless of success ;
Waste youth in occupations only fit
For second childhood, and devote old age
To sports, which only childhood could excuse.
There they are happiest, who dissemble best
Their weariness ; and they the most polite,
Who squander time and treasure with a smile,
Though at their own destruction. She that asks
Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all,
And hates their coming. They (what can they less ?)
Make just reprisals ; and, with cringe and shrug,
And bow obsequious, hide their hate of her.
All catch the frenzy, downward from her grace,
Whose flambeaux flash against the morning skies,
And gild our chamber ceilings as they pass,
To her, who, frugal only that her thrift
May feed excesses she can ill afford,

Is hackney'd home unlackey'd ; who, in haste
 Alighting, turns the key in her own door,
 And, at the watchman's lantern bor'wing light,
 Finds a cold bed her only comfort left.
 Wives beggar husbands, husbands starve their wives,
 On Fortune's velvet altar off'ring up
 Their last poor pittance—Fortune, most severe
 Of goddesses yet known, and costlier far
 Than all, that held their routs in heathen heav'n.—
 So fare we in this prison-house the World ;
 And 'tis a fearful spectacle to see
 So many maniacs dancing in their chains.
 They gaze upon the links, that hold them fast,
 With eyes of anguish, execrate their lot,
 Then shake them in despair, and dance again !

Now basket up the family of plagues,
 That waste our vitals ; peculation, sale
 Of honour, perjury, corruption, frauds
 By forgery, by subterfuge of law,
 By tricks and lies as num'rous and as keen
 As the necessities their authors feel ;
 Then cast them, closely bundled, ev'ry brat
 At the right door. Profusion is the sire.
 Profusion unrestrain'd, with all that's base
 In character, has litter'd all the land,
 And bred, within the mem'ry of no few,
 A priesthood, such as Baal's was of old,
 A people, such as never was till now.
 It is a hungry vice :—it eats up all
 That gives society its beauty, strength,
 Convenience, and security, and use :
 Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapp'd
 And gibbeted, as fast as catchpole claws
 Can seize the slipp'ry prey : unties the knot
 Of union, and converts the sacred band,
 That holds mankind together, to a scourge.
 Profusion, deluging a state with lusts
 Of grossest nature and of worst effects,
 Prepares it for its ruin : hardens, blinds,
 And warps, the consciences of public men,

Till they can laugh at Virtue; mock the fools,
That trust them; and in th' end disclose a face,
That would have shock'd Credulity herself,
Unmask'd, vouchsafing this their sole excuse—
Since all alike are selfish, why not they?
This does Profusion, and th' accursed cause
Of such deep mischief has itself a cause.

In colleges and halls in ancient days,
When learning, virtue, piety, and truth,
Were precious, and inculcated with care,
There dwelt a sage call'd Discipline. His head,
Not yet by time completely silver'd o'er,
Bespoke him past the bounds of freakish youth,
But strong for service still, and unimpair'd.
His eye was meek and gentle, and a smile
Play'd on his lips; and in his speech was heard
Paternal sweetness, dignity, and love.
The occupation dearest to his heart
Was to encourage goodness. He would stroke
The head of modest and ingenuous worth,
That blush'd at its own praise; and press the youth
Close to his side, that pleas'd him. Learning grew
Beneath his care a thriving vig'rous plant;
The mind was well inform'd, the passions held
Subordinate, and diligence was choice.
If e'er it chanc'd, as sometimes chance it must,
That one among so many overleap'd
The limits of control, his gentle eye
Grew stern, and darted a severe rebuke:
His frown was full of terroure, and his voice
Shook the delinquent with such fits of awe,
As left him not, till penitence had won
Lost favour back again, and clos'd the breach.
But Discipline, a faithful servant long,
Declin'd at length into the vale of years:
A palsy struck his arm; his sparkling eye
Was quench'd in rheums of age; his voice, unstrung,
Grew tremulous, and drew derision more
Than rev'rence in perverse, rebellious youth.
So colleges and halls neglected much

Their good old friend ; and Discipline at length,
O'erlook'd and unemploy'd, fell sick and died.
Then Study languish'd, Emulation slept,
And Virtue fled. The schools became a scene
Of solemn farce, where Ignorance in stilts,
His cap well lin'd with logic not his own,
With parrot tongue perform'd the scholar's part,
Proceeding soon a graduated dunce.
Then Compromise had place, and Scrutiny
Became stone blind ; Precedence went in truck,
And he was competent whose purse was so.
A dissolution of all bonds ensued ;
The curbs invented for the mulish mouth
Of headstrong youth were broken ; bars and bolts
Grew rusty by disuse ; and massy gates
Forgot their office, op'ning with a touch ;
Till gowns at length are found mere masquerade,
The tassell'd cap, and the spruce band a jest,
A mock'ry of the world ! What need of these
For gamesters, jockeys, brothellers impure,
Spendthrifts, and booted sportsmen, oft'ner seen
With belted waist and pointers at their heels,
Than in the bounds of duty ? What was learn'd,
If aught was learn'd in childhood, is forgot ;
And such expense, as pinches parents blue,
And mortifies the lib'ral hand of love,
Is squander'd in pursuit of idle sports
And vicious pleasures ; buys the boy a name,
That sits a stigma on his father's house,
And cleaves through life inseparably close
To him that wears it. What can after-games
Of riper joys, and commerce with the world,
The lewd vain world, that must receive him soon,
Add to such erudition, thus acquir'd,
Where science and where virtue are profess'd ?
They may confirm his habits, rivet fast
His folly, but to spoil him is a task,
That bids defiance to th' united pow'rs
Of fashion, dissipation, taverns, stews.
Now blame we most the nurslings or the nurse ?

The children crook'd, and twisted, and deform'd,
Through want of care ; or her, whose winking eye
And slumb'ring oscitancy mars the brood ?
The nurse no doubt. Regardless of her charge,
She needs herself correction ; needs to learn,
That it is dang'rous sporting with the world,
With things so sacred as a nation's trust,
The nurture of her youth, her dearest pledge.

All are not such. I had a brother once—
Peace to the mem'ry of a man of worth,
A man of letters, and of manners too !
Of manners sweet as Virtue always wears,
When gay Good-nature dresses her in smiles.
He grac'd a college*, in which order yet
Was sacred ; and was honour'd, lov'd, and wept,
By more than one, themselves conspicuous there.
Some minds are temper'd happily, and mix'd
With such ingredients of good sense, and taste
Of what is excellent in man, they thirst
With such a zeal to be what they approve,
That no restraints can circumscribe them more
Than they themselves by choice, for wisdom's sake.
Nor can example hurt them : what they see
Of vice in others but enhancing more
The charms of virtue in their just esteem.
If such escape contagion, and emerge
Pure from so foul a pool to shine abroad,
And give the world their talents and themselves,
Small thanks to those whose negligence or sloth
Expos'd their inexperience to the snare,
And left them to an undirected choice.

See then the quiver broken and decay'd,
In which are kept our arrows ? Rusting there
In wild disorder, and unfit for use,
What wonder if, discharg'd into the world,
They shame their shooters with a random flight,
Their points obtuse, and feathers drunk with wine !
Well may the church wage unsuccessful war
With such artill'ry arm'd. Vice parries wide .

* Bene't Coll. Cambridge.

Th' undreaded volley with a sword of straw,
And stands an impudent and fearless mark.

Have we not track'd the felon home, and found
His birth-place and his dam ? The country mourns,
Mourns because ev'ry plague, that can infest
Society, and that saps and worms the base
Of th' edifice, that Policy has rais'd,
Swarms in all quarters : meets the eye, the ear,
And suffocates the breath at ev'ry turn.
Profusion breeds them ; and the cause itself
Of that calamitous mischief has been found :
Found too where most offensive, in the skirts
Of the rob'd pedagogue ! Else let th' arraign'd
Stand up unconscious, and refute the charge.
So when the Jewish leader stretch'd his arm,
And wav'd his rod divine, a race obscene,
Spawn'd in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth,
Polluting Egypt : gardens, fields, and plains,
Were cover'd with the pest ; the streets were fill'd ;
The croaking nuisance lurk'd in every nook ;
Nor palaces, nor even chambers, 'scap'd ;
And the land stank—so num'rous was the fry.

THE TASK.

BOOK III.

THE GARDEN.

Argument of the Third Book.

Self-recollection and reproof.—Address to domestic happiness.—Some account of myself.—The vanity of many of their pursuits who are reputed wise.—Justification of my censures.—Divine illumination necessary to the most expert philosopher.—The question, What is truth? answered by other questions.—Domestic happiness addressed again.—Few lovers of the country.—My tame hare.—Occupations of a retired gentleman in his garden.—Framing.—Framing.—Green-houses.—Sowing of flower-seeds.—The country preferable to the town even in winter.—Reasons why it is deserted at that season.—Ruinous effects of gaming, and of expensive improvement.—Book concludes with an apostrophe to the metropolis.

As one, who long in thickets and in brakes
 Entangled, winds now this way and now that
 His devious course uncertain, seeking home ;
 Or, having long in miry ways been foil'd
 And sore discomfited, from slough to slough
 Plunging, and half despairing of escape ;
 If chance at length he find a greensward smooth
 And faithful to the foot, his spirits rise,
 He cherups brisk his ear-erecting steed,
 And winds his way with pleasure and with ease :
 So I, designing other themes, and call'd
 T' adorn the Sofa with eulogium due,
 To tell its slumbers, and to paint its dreams,
 Have rambled wide, in country, city, seat
 Of academic fame (howe'er deserv'd),
 Long held, and scarcely disengag'd at last.
 But now with pleasant pace a cleaner road
 I mean to tread : I feel myself at large,
 Courageous, and refresh'd for future toil,
 If toil await me, or if dangers new.

Since pulpits fail, and sounding boards reflect
Most part an empty, ineffectual sound,
What chance that I, to fame so little known,
Nor conversant with men or manners much,
Should speak to purpose, or with better hope
Crack the satiric thong? 'Twere wiser far
For me, enamour'd of sequester'd scenes,
And charm'd with rural beauty, to repose,
Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or vine,
My languid limbs, when summer sears the plains,
Or, when rough winter rages, on the soft
And shelter'd sofa, while the nitrous air
Feeds a blue flame, and makes a cheerful hearth;
There, undisturb'd by Folly, and appris'd
How great the danger of disturbing her,
To muse in silence, or, at least, confine
Remarks, that gall so many, to the few
My partners in retreat. Disgust conceal'd
Is oftentimes proof of wisdom, when the fault
Is obstinate, and cure beyond our reach.

Domestic Happiness, thou only bliss
Of Paradise, that hast surviv'd the fall!
Though few now taste thee unimpair'd and pure,
Or tasting long enjoy thee! too infirm,
Or too incautious, to preserve thy sweets
Unmix'd with drops of bitter, which neglect
Or tamper sheds into thy crystal cup,
Thou art the nurse of Virtue; in thine arms
She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,
Heav'n-born, and destin'd to the skies again.
Thou art not known where Pleasure is ador'd,
That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist
And wand'ring eyes, still leaning on the arm
Of Novelty, her fickle, frail support;
For thou art meek and constant, hating change,
And finding in the calm of truth-tried love
Joys that her stormy raptures never yield.
Forsaking thee what shipwreck have we made
Of honour, dignity, and fair renown!
Till prostitution elbows us aside.

In all our crowded streets ; and senates seem
Conven'd for purposes of empire less,
Than to release th' adultress from her bond.
Th' adultress ! what a theme for angry verse !
What provocation to th' indignant heart,
That feels for injur'd love ! but I disdain
The nauseous task to paint her as she is,
Cruel, abandon'd, glorying in her shame !
No : let her pass, and, chariotted along
In guilty splendour, shake the public ways ;
The frequency of crimes has wash'd them white,
And verse of mine shall never brand the wretch,
Whom matrons now of character unsmirch'd,
And chaste themselves, are not asham'd to own.
Virtue and vice had bound'ries in old time,
Not to be pass'd : and she, that had renounc'd
Her sex's honour, was renounc'd herself
By all that priz'd it ; not for prud'ry's sake,
But dignity's, resentful of the wrong.
'Twas hard perhaps on here and there a waif,
Desirous to return, and not receiv'd :
But 'twas a wholesome rigour in the main,
And taught th' unblemish'd to preserve with care
That purity, whose loss was loss of all.
Men too were nice in honour in those days,
And judg'd offenders well. Then he that sharp'd,
And pocketted a prize by fraud obtain'd,
Was mark'd and shunn'd as odious. He that sold
His country, or was slack when she requir'd
His ev'ry nerve in action and at stretch,
Paid with the blood, that he had basely spar'd,
The price of his default. But now—yes, now
We are become so candid and so fair,
So lib'ral in construction, and so rich
In Christian charity, (good natur'd age !)
That they are safe, sinners of either sex,
Transgress what laws they may. Well dress'd, well
bred,
Well equipag'd, is ticket good enough
To pass us readily through ev'ry door.

Hypocrisy, detest her as we may,
(And no man's hatred ever wrong'd her yet)
May claim this merit still—that she admits
The worth of what she mimics with such care,
And thus gives virtue indirect applause ;
But she has burnt her mask, not needed here,
Where vice has such allowance, that her shifts
And specious semblances have lost their use.

I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
Long since. With many an arrow deep infix'd
My panting side was charg'd, when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There was I found by one who had himself
Been hurt by th' archers. In his side he bore,
And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.
With gentle force soliciting the darts,
He drew them forth, and heal'd, and bade me live.
Since then, with few associates, in remote
And silent woods I wander, far from those
My former partners of the peopled scene ;
With few associates, and not wishing more.
Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
With other views of men and manners now
Than once, and others of a life to come.
I see that all are wand'ers, gone astray
Each in his own delusions ; they are lost
In chase of fancied happiness, still woo'd
And never won. Dream after dream ensues ;
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,
And still are disappointed. Rings the world
With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind,
And add two-thirds of the remainder half,
And find the total of their hopes and fears
Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay
As if created only like the fly,
That spreads his motley wings in th' eye of noon,
To sport their season, and be seen no more.
The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,
And pregnant with discov'ries new and rare.
Some write a narrative of wars, and feats

Of heroes little known ; and call the rant
A history : describe the man, of whom
His own coevals took but little note,
And paint his person, character, and views,
As they had known him from his mother's womb.
They disentangle from the puzzled skein,
In which obscurity has wrapp'd them up,
The threads of politic and shrewd design,
That ran through all his purposes, and charge
His mind with meanings that he never had,
Or, having, kept conceal'd. Some drill and bore
The solid earth, and from the strata there
Extract a register, by which we learn,
That he who made it, and reveal'd its date
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.
Some, more acute, and more industrious still,
Contrive creation ; travel nature up
To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,
And tell us whence the stars ; why some are fix'd,
And planetary some ; what gave them first
Rotation, from what fountain flow'd their light.
Great contest follows, and much learned dust
Involves the combatants ; each claiming truth,
And truth disclaiming both. And thus they spend
The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp
In playing tricks with nature, giving laws
To distant worlds, and trifling in their own.
Is 't not a pity now that tickling rheums
Should ever tease the lungs, and blear the sight,
Of oracles like these ? Great pity too,
That having wielded th' elements, and built
A thousand systems, each in his own way,
They should go out in fume, and be forgot ?
Ah ! what is life thus spent ? and what are they
But frantic, who thus spend it ? all for smoke—
Eternity for bubbles proves at last
A senseless bargain. When I see such games
Play'd by the creatures of a Pow'r, who swears
That he will judge the earth, and call the fool
To a sharp reck'ning, that has liv'd in vain ;

And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well,
And prove it in th' infallible result
So hollow and so false—I feel my heart
Dissolve in pity, and account the learn'd,
If this be learning, most of all deceiv'd.
Great crimes alarm the conscience, but she sleeps,
While thoughtful man is plausibly amus'd.
Defend me therefore, common sense, say I,
From reveries so airy, from the toil
Of dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up !
'Twere well, says one sage erudite, profound,
Terribly arch'd, and aquiline his nose,
And overbuilt with most impending brows,
'Twere well, could you permit the world to live
As the world pleases : what's the world to you ?
Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk
As sweet as charity from human breasts.
I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,
And exercise all functions of a man.
How then should I and any man that lives
Be strangers to each other ? Pierce my vein,
Take of the crimson stream meand'ring there,
And catechise it well ; apply your glass,
Search it, and prove now if it be not blood
Congenial with thine own : and, if it be,
What edge of subtlety canst thou suppose
Keen enough, wise and skilful as thou art,
To cut the link of brotherhood, by which
One common Maker bound me to the kind ?
True ; I am no proficient, I confess,
In arts like yours. I cannot call the swift
And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds,
And bid them hide themselves in earth beneath ;
I cannot analyse the air, nor catch
The parallax of yonder lum'nous point,
That seems half quench'd in the immense abyss :
Such pow'rs I boast not—neither can I rest
A silent witness of the headlong rage,

Or heedless folly, by which thousands die,
Bone of my bone, and kindred souls to mine.

God never meant that man should scale the heav'ns
By strides of human wisdom, in his works,
Though wondrous : he commands us in his word
To seek him rather where his mercy shines.
The mind, indeed, enlighten'd from above,
Views him in all ; ascribes to the grand cause
The grand effect ; acknowledges with joy
His manner, and with rapture tastes his style.
But never yet did philosophic tube,
That brings the planets home into the eye
Of Observation, and discovers, else
Not visible, his family of worlds,
Discover him that rules them ; such a veil
Hangs over mortal eyes, blind from the birth,
And dark in things divine. Full often too
Our wayward intellect, the more we learn
Of nature, overlooks her author more ;
From instrumental causes proud to draw
Conclusions retrograde, and mad mistake.
But if his Word once teach us, shoot a ray
Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal
Truths undiscern'd but by that holy light,
Then all is plain. Philosophy, baptiz'd
In the pure fountain of eternal love,
Has eyes indeed ; and viewing all she sees
As meant to indicate a God to man,
Gives *him* his praise, and forfeits not her own.
Learning has borne such fruit in other days
On all her branches : piety has found
Friends in the friends of science, and true pray'r
Has flow'd from lips wet with Castalian dews.
Such was thy wisdom, Newton, child-like sage !
Sagacious reader of the works of God,
And in his word sagacious. Such too thine,
Milton, whose genius had angelic wings,
And fed on manna ! And such thine, in whom
Our British Themis gloried with just cause,
Immortal Hale ; for deep discernment prais'd,

And sound integrity, not more than fam'd
For sanctity of manners undefil'd.

All flesh is grass, and all its glory fades
Like the fair flow'r dishevell'd in the wind ;
Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream.
The man we celebrate must find a tomb,
And we that worship him ignoble graves.
Nothing is proof against the gen'ral curse
Of vanity, that seizes all below.

The only amaranthine flow'r on earth
Is virtue ; th' only lasting treasure, truth.
But what is truth ? 'Twas Pilate's question put
To Truth itself, that deign'd him no reply.
And wherefore ? will not God impart his light
To them that ask it ?—Freely—'tis his joy,
His glory, and his nature, to impart.
But to the proud, uncandid, insincere,
Or negligent inquirer, not a spark.
What's that, which brings contempt upon a book,
And him who writes it, though the style be neat,
The method clear, and argument exact ?
That makes a minister in holy things
The joy of many, and the dread of more,
His name a theme for praise and for reproach ?—
That, while it gives us worth in God's account,
Depreciates and undoes us in our own ?
What pearl is it, that rich men cannot buy,
That learning is too proud to gather up ;
But which the poor, and the despis'd of all,
Seek and obtain, and often find unsought ?
Tell me—and I will tell thee what is truth.

O friendly to the best pursuits of man,
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,
Domestic life in rural pleasure pass'd !
Few know thy value, and few taste thy sweets ;
Though many boast thy favours, and affect
To understand and choose thee for their own.
But foolish man foregoes his proper bliss,
E'en as his first progenitor, and quits,
Though plac'd in Paradise (for earth has still

Some traces of her youthful beauty left,
Substantial happiness for transient joy.
Scenes form'd for contemplation, and to nurse
The growing seeds of wisdom ; that suggest,
By ev'ry pleasing image they present,
Reflections such as meliorate the heart,
Compose the passions, and exalt the mind ;
Scenes such as these 'tis his supreme delight
To fill with riot and defile with blood.
Should some contagion, kind to the poor brutes
We persecute, annihilate the tribes,
That draw the sportsman over hill and dale
Fearless, and rapt away from all his cares ;
Should never game-fowl hatch her eggs again,
Nor baited hook deceive the fish's eye ;
Could pageantry and dance, and feast and song,
Be quell'd in all our summer-months' retreats ;
How many self-deluded nymphs and swains,
Who dream they have a taste for fields and groves
Would find them hideous nurs'ries of the spleen,
And crowd the roads, impatient for the town !
They love the country, and none else, who seek
For their own sake its silence, and its shade.
Delights which who would leave, that has a heart
Susceptible of pity, or a mind
Cultur'd and capable of sober thought,
For all the savage din of the swift pack,
And clamours of the field ?—Detested sport,
That owes its pleasures to another's pain ;
That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks
Of harmless nature, dumb, but yet endued
With eloquence, that agonies inspire,
Of silent tears and heart-distending sighs ?
Vain tears, alas, and sighs that never find
A corresponding tone in jovial souls !
Well—one at least is safe. One shelter'd hare
Has never heard the sanguinary yell
Of cruel man, exulting in her woes.
Innocent partner of my peaceful home,
Whom ten long years' experience of my care

Has made at last familiar ; she has lost
 Much of her vigilant instinctive dread,
 Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.
 Yes—thou mayst eat thy bread, and lick the hand
 That feeds thee ; thou mayst frolic on the floor
 At ev'ning, and at night retire secure
 To thy straw couch, and slumber unalarm'd ;
 For I have gain'd thy confidence, have pledg'd
 All that is human in me, to protect
 Thine unsuspecting gratitude and love.
 If I survive thee, I will dig thy grave ;
 And, when I place thee in it, sighing say,
 I knew at least one hare that had a friend*.

How various his enjoyments, whom the world
 Calls idle ; and who justly in return
 Esteems that busy world an idler too !
 Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps his pen,
 Delightful industry enjoy'd at home,
 And Nature in her cultivated trim
 Dress'd to his taste, inviting him abroad—
 Can he want occupation, who has these ?
 Will he be idle, who has much t' enjoy ?
 Me therefore studious of laborious ease,
 Not slothful, happy to deceive the time,
 Not waste it, and aware that human life
 Is but a loan to be repaid with use,
 When he shall call his debtors to account,
 From whom are all our blessings, business finds
 E'en here : while sedulous I seek t' improve,
 At least neglect not, or leave unemploy'd,
 The mind he gave me ; driving it, though slack
 Too oft, and much impeded in its work
 By causes not to be divulg'd in vain,
 To its just point—the service of mankind.
 He, that attends to his interior self,
 That has a heart, and keeps it ; has a mind
 That hungers, and supplies it ; and who seeks
 A social, not a dissipated life,
 Has business ; feels himself engag'd t' achieve

* See the note at the end of this volume.

No unimportant, though a silent, task.
A life all turbulence and noise may seem
To him that leads it wise, and to be prais'd ;
But wisdom is a pearl with most success
Sought in still water, and beneath clear skies.
He that is ever occupied in storms,
Or dives not for it, or brings up instead,
Vainly industrious, a disgraceful prize.

The morning finds the self-sequester'd man
Fresh for his task, intend what task he may.
Whether inclement seasons recommend
His warm but simple home, where he enjoys
With her, who shares his pleasures and his heart,
Sweet converse, sipping calm the fragrant lymph,
Which neatly she prepares ; then to his book
Well chosen, and not sullenly perus'd
In selfish silence, but imparted oft,
As aught occurs, that she may smile to hear,
Or turn to nourishment, digested well.
Or if the garden with its many cares,
All well repaid, demand him, he attends
The welcome call, conscious how much the hand
Of lubbard labour needs his watchful eye,
Oft loit'ring lazily, if not o'erseen,
Or misapplying his unskilful strength.
Nor does he govern only or direct,
But much performs himself. No works indeed,
That ask robust, tough sinews, bred to toil,
Servile employ ; but such as may amuse,
Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.
Proud of his well-spread walls, he views his trees,
That meet, no barren interval between,
With pleasure more than e'en their fruits afford ;
Which, save himself who trains them, none can feel.
These therefore are his own peculiar charge ;
No meaner hand may discipline the shoots,
None but his steel approach them. What is weak,
Distemper'd, or has lost prolific pow'rs,
Impair'd by age, his unrelenting hand
Dooms to the knife : nor does he spare the soft

And succulent, that feeds its giant growth,
 But barren, at th' expense of neighb'ring twigs
 Less ostentatious, and yet studded thick
 With hopeful gems. The rest, no portion left
 That may disgrace his art, or disappoint
 Large expectation, he disposes neat
 At measur'd distances, that air and sun,
 Admitted freely, may afford their aid,
 And ventilate and warm the swelling buds.
 Hence Summer has her riches, Autumn hence,
 And hence e'en Winter fills his wither'd hand
 With blushing fruits, and plenty not his own*.
 Fair recompense of labour well bestow'd,
 And wise precaution ; which a clime so rude
 Makes needful still, whose Spring is but the child
 Of churlish Winter, in her froward moods
 Discov'ring much the temper of her sire.
 For oft, as if in her the stream of mild
 Maternal nature had revers'd its course,
 She brings her infants forth with many smiles ;
 But once deliver'd kills them with a frown.
 He therefore, timely warn'd, himself supplies
 Her want of care, screening and keeping warm
 The plenteous bloom, that no rough blast may sweep
 His garlands from the boughs. Again, as oft
 As the sun peeps and vernal airs breathe mild,
 The fence withdrawn, he gives them ev'ry beam,
 And spreads his hopes before the blaze of day.
 To raise the prickly and green-coated gourd,
 So grateful to the palate, and when rare
 So coveted, else base and disesteem'd—
 Food for the vulgar merely—is an art
 That toiling ages have but just matur'd,
 And at this moment unessay'd in song.
 Yet gnats have had, and frogs and mice, long since,
 Their eulogy ; those sang the Mantuan bard,
 And these the Grecian, in ennobling strains ;
 And in thy numbers, Philips, shines for aye
 The solitary shilling. Pardon then,

* ' *Miraturque novos fructus et non sua poma.*'—Virg.

Ye sage dispensers of poetic fame,
Th' ambition of one meaner far, whose pow'rs,
Presuming an attempt not less sublime,
Pant for the praise of dressing to the taste
Of critic appetite, no sordid fare,
A cucumber, while costly yet and scarce.

The stable yields a stercoraceous heap,
Impregnated with quick fermenting salts,
And potent to resist the freezing blast :
For, ere the beech and elm have cast their leaf
Deciduous, when now November dark
Checks vegetation in the torpid plant
Expos'd to his cold breath, the task begins.
Warily therefore, and with prudent heed,
He seeks a favour'd spot ; that where he builds
Th' agglomerated pile his frame may front
The sun's meridian disk, and at the back
Enjoy close shelter, wall, or reeds, or hedge
Impervious to the wind. First he bids spread
Dry fern or litter'd hay, that may imbibe
Th' ascending damps ; then leisurely impose,
And lightly, shaking it with agile hand
From the full fork, the saturated straw.
What longest binds the closest forms secure
The shapely side, that as it rises takes,
By just degrees, an overhanging breadth,
Shelt'ring the base with its projected eaves ;
Th' uplifted frame, compact at ev'ry joint,
And overlaid with clear translucent glass,
He settles next upon the sloping mount,
Whose sharp declivity shoots off secure
From the dash'd pane the deluge as it falls.
He shuts it close, and the first labour ends.
Thrice must the voluble and restless Earth
Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth,
Slow gath'ring in the midst, through the square mass
Diffus'd, attain the surface : when, behold !
A pestilent and most corrosive steam,
Like a gross fog Bœotian, rising fast,
And fast condens'd upon the dewy sash,

Asks egress ; which obtain'd, the overcharg'd
And drench'd conservatory breathes abroad,
In volumes wheeling slow, the vapour dank ;
And, purified, rejoices to have lost
Its foul inhabitant. But to assuage
Th' impatient fervour, which it first conceives
Within its reeking bosom, threat'ning death
To his young hopes, requires discreet delay.
Experience, slow preceptress, teaching oft
The way to glory by miscarriage foul,
Must prompt him, and admonish how to catch
Th' auspicious moment, when the temper'd heat,
Friendly to vital motion, may afford
Soft fomentation, and invite the seed.
The seed, selected wisely, plump, and smooth,
And glossy, he commits to pots of size
Diminutive, well fill'd with well-prepar'd
And fruitful soil, that has been treasur'd long,
And drunk no moisture from the dripping clouds.
These on the warm and genial earth, that hides
The smoking manure, and o'erspreads it all,
He places lightly, and, as time subdues
The rage of fermentation, plunges deep
In the soft medium, till they stand immers'd.
Then rise the tender germs, upstarting quick,
And spreading wide their spongy lobes ; at first
Pale, wan, and livid ; but assuming soon,
If fann'd by balmy and nutritious air,
Strain'd through the friendly mats, a vivid green.
Two leaves produc'd, two rough indented leaves,
Cautious he pinches from the second stalk
A pimple, that portends a future sprout,
And interdicts its growth. Thence straight succeed
The branches, sturdy to his utmost wish ;
Prolific all, and harbingers of more.
The crowded roots demand enlargement now,
And transplantation in an ampler space.
Indulg'd in what they wish, they soon supply
Large foliage, o'ershadowing golden flow'rs,
Blown on the summit of th' apparent fruit.

These have their sexes ! and, when summer shines,
The bee transports the fertilizing meal
From flow'r to flow'r, and e'en the breathing air
Wafts the rich prize to its appointed use.
Not so when winter scowls. Assistant Art
Then acts in Nature's office, brings to pass
The glad espousals, and ensures the crop.

Grudge not, ye rich (since Luxury must have
His dainties, and the World's more num'rous half
Lives by contriving delicacies for you),
Grudge not the cost. Ye little know the cares,
The vigilance, the labour, and the skill,
That day and night are exercis'd, and hang
Upon the ticklish balance of suspense,
That ye may garnish your profuse regales
With summer fruits brought forth by wintry suns.
Ten thousand dangers lie in wait to thwart
The process. Heat and cold, and wind, and steam,
Moisture and drought, mice, worms, and swarming
flies,

Minute as dust, and numberless, oft work
Dire disappointment, that admits no cure,
And which no care can obviate. It were long,
Too long, to tell th' expedients and the shifts,
Which he that fights a season so severe
Devises, while he guards his tender trust ;
And oft at last in vain. The learn'd and wise
Sarcastic would exclaim, and judge the song
Cold as its theme, and like its theme the fruit
Of too much labour, worthless when produc'd.

Who loves a garden loves a green-house too.
Unconscious of a less propitious clime,
There blooms exotic beauty, warm and snug,
While the winds whistle, and the snows descend.
The spiry myrtle with unwith'ring leaf
Shines there, and flourishes. The golden boast
Of Portugal and western India there,
The ruddier orange, and the paler lime,
Peep through their polish'd foliage at the storm,
And seem to smile at what they need not fear.

Th' amomum there with intermingling flow'rs
And cherries hangs her twigs. Geranium boasts
Her crimson honours ; and the spangled beau,
Ficoides, glitters bright the winter long.
All plants, of ev'ry leaf, that can endure
The winter's frown, if screen'd from his shrewd bite,
Live there, and prosper. Those Ausonia claims,
Levantine regions these ; th' Azores send
Their jessamine, her jessamine remote
Caffraria: foreigners from many lands,
They form one social shade, as if conven'd
By magic summons of th' Orphean lyre.
Yet just arrangement, rarely brought to pass
But by a master's hand, disposing well
The gay diversities of leaf and flow'r,
Must lend its aid t' illustrate all their charms,
And dress the regular yet various scene.
Plant behind plant aspiring, in the van
The dwarfish, in the rear retir'd, but still
Sublime above the rest, the statelier stand.
So once were rang'd the sons of ancient Rome,
A noble show ! while Roscius trod the stage,
And so, while Garrick, as renown'd as he,
The sons of Albion ; fearing each to lose
Some note of Nature's music from his lips,
And covetous of Shakspeare's beauty, seen
In ev'ry flash of his far-beaming eye.
Nor taste alone and well-contriv'd display
Suffice to give the marshall'd ranks the grace
Of their complete effect. Much yet remains
Unsung, and many cares are yet behind,
And more laborious ; cares on which depends
Their vigour, injur'd soon, not soon restor'd.
The soil must be renew'd, which often wash'd
Loses its treasure of salubrious salts,
And disappoints the roots ; the slender roots
Close interwoven, where they meet the vase
Must smooth be shorn away ; the sapless branch
Must fly before the knife ; the wither'd leaf
Must be detach'd, and where it strews the floor

Swept with a woman's neatness, breeding else
Contagion, and disseminating death.
Discharge but these kind offices, (and who
Would spare, that loves them, offices like these ?)
Well they reward the toil. The sight is pleas'd,
The scent regal'd, each odorif'rous leaf,
Each op'ning blossom, freely breathes abroad
Its gratitude, and thanks him with its sweets.

So manifold, all pleasing in their kind,
All healthful, are th' employs of rural life,
Reiterated as the wheel of time
Runs round ; still ending, and beginning still.
Nor are these all. To deck the shapely knoll,
That softly swell'd and gaily dress'd appears
A flow'ry island, from the dark green lawn
Emerging, must be deem'd a labour due
To no mean hand, and asks the touch of taste.
Here also grateful mixture of well-match'd
And sorted hues (each giving each relief,
And by contrasted beauty shining more)
Is needful. Strength may wield the pond'rous spade,
May turn the clod, and wheel the compost home ;
But elegance, chief grace the garden shows,
And most attractive, is the fair result
Of thought, the creature of a polish'd mind.
Without it all is gothic as the scene,
To which th' insipid citizen resorts
Near yonder heath ; where Industry misspent,
But proud of his uncouth ill-chosen task,
Has made a heav'n on earth ; with suns and moons
Of close-ramm'd stones has charg'd th' encumber'd soil,
And fairly laid the zodiac in the dust.
He therefore, who would see his flow'rs dispos'd
Sightly and in just order, ere he gives
The beds the trusted treasure of their seeds,
Forecasts the future whole ; that when the scene
Shall break into its preconceiv'd display,
Each for itself, and all as with one voice
Conspiring, may attest his bright design.
Nor even then, dismissing as perform'd

His pleasant work, may he suppose it done.
Few self-supported flow'rs endure the wind
Uninjur'd, but expect th' upholding aid
Of the smooth-shaven prop, and, neatly tied,
Are wedded thus, like beauty to old age,
For int'rest sake, the living to the dead.
Some clothe the soil that feeds them, far diffus'd
And lowly creeping, modest and yet fair,
Like virtue, thriving most where little seen :
Some more aspiring catch the neighbour shrub
With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch,
Else unadorn'd, with many a gay festoon
And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well
The strength they borrow with the grace they lend.
All hate the rank society of weeds,
Noisome, and ever greedy to exhaust.
Th' improv'rish'd earth ; an overbearing race,
That, like the multitude made faction-mad,
Disturb good order, and degrade true worth.

O blest seclusion from a jarring world,
Which he, thus occupied, enjoys ! Retreat
Cannot indeed to guilty man restore
Lost innocence, or cancel follies past ;
But it has peace, and much secures the mind
From all assaults of evil ; proving still
A faithful barrier, not o'erleap'd with ease
By vicious Custom, raging uncontroll'd
Abroad, and desolating public life.
When fierce Temptation, seconded within
By traitor Appetite, and arm'd with darts
Temper'd in hell, invades the throbbing breast,
To combat may be glorious, and success
Perhaps may crown us ; but to fly is safe.
Had I the choice of sublunary good,
What could I wish, that I possess not here ?
Health, leisure, means t' improve it, friendship, peace,
No loose or wanton, though a wand'ring, muse,
And constant occupation without care.
Thus blest I draw a picture of that bliss ;
Hopeless, indeed, that dissipated minds,

And profligate abusers of a world
Created fair so much in vain for them,
Should seek the guiltless joys, that I describe,
Allur'd by my report: but sure no less,
That self-condemn'd they must neglect the prize,
And what they will not taste must yet approve.
What we admire we praise; and, when we praise,
Advance it into notice, that, its worth
Acknowledg'd, others may admire it too.
I therefore recommend, though at the risk
Of popular disgust, yet boldly still,
The cause of piety, and sacred truth,
And virtue, and those scenes, which God ordain'd
Should best secure them, and promote them most;
Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive
Forsaken, or through folly not enjoy'd.
Pure is the nymph, though lib'ral of her smiles,
And chaste, though unconfin'd, whom I extol.
Not as the prince in Shushan, when he call'd,
Vainglorious of her charms, his Vashti forth,
To grace the full pavilion. His design
Was but to boast his own peculiar good,
Which all might view with envy, none partake.
My charmer is not mine alone; my sweets,
And she that sweetens all my bitters too,
Nature, enchanting Nature, in whose form
And lineaments divine I trace a hand
That errs not, and find raptures still renew'd,
Is free to all men—universal prize.
Strange that so fair a creature should yet want
Admirers, and be destin'd to divide
With meaner objects e'en the few she finds!
Stripp'd of her ornaments, her leaves and flow'rs,
She loses all her influence. Cities then
Attract us, and neglected Nature pines
Abandon'd, as unworthy of our love.
But are not wholesome airs, though unperfum'd
By roses; and clear suns, though scarcely felt;
And groves, if unharmonious, yet secure
From clamour, and whose very silence charms;

To be prefer'd to smoke, to the eclipses,
 That metropolitan volcanoes make,
 Whose Stygian throats breathe darkness all day long;
 And to the stir of Commerce, driving slow,
 And thrund'ring loud, with his ten thousand wheels?
 They would be, were not madness in the head,
 And folly in the heart; were England now,
 What England was, plain, hospitable, kind,
 And undebauch'd. But we have bid farewell
 To all the virtues of those better days,
 And all their honest pleasures. Mansions once
 Knew their own masters; and laborious hinds,
 Who had surviv'd the father, serv'd the son.
 Now the legitimate and rightful lord
 Is but a transient guest, newly arriv'd,
 As soon to be supplanted. He, that saw
 His patrimonial timber cast its leaf,
 Sells the last scantling, and transfers the price
 To some shrewd sharper, ere it buds again.
 Estates are landscapes, gaz'd upon a while,
 Then advertis'd, and auctioneer'd away.
 The country starves, and they, that feed th' o'er-
 charg'd

And surfeited lewd town with her fair dnes,
 By a just judgment strip and starve themselves.
 The wings, that waft our riches out of sight,
 Grow on the gamester's elbows; and th' alert
 And nimble motion of those restless joints,
 That never tire, soon fans them all away.
 Improvement too, the idol of the age,
 Is fed with many a victim. Lo, he comes!
 Th' omnipotent magician, Brown, appears!
 Down falls the venerable pile, th' abode
 Of our forefathers—a grave whisker'd race,
 But tasteless. Springs a palace in its stead,
 But in a distant spot; where more expos'd
 It may enjoy th' advantage of the north,
 And aguish east, till time shall have transform'd
 Those naked acres to a shelt'ring grove.
 He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn;

Woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise;
 And streams, as if created for his use,
 Pursue the track of his directing wand,
 Sinuous or straight, now rapid and now slow,
 Now murmur'ing soft, now rearing in cascades—
 E'en as he bids ! Th' enraptar'd owner smiles.
 'Tis finish'd, and yet, finish'd as it seems,
 Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could show,
 A mine to satisfy th' enormous cost.
 Drain'd to the last poor item of his wealth,
 He sighs, departs, and leaves th' accomplish'd plan,
 That he has touch'd, retouch'd, many a long day
 Labour'd, and many a night pursu'd in dreams,
 Just when it meets his hopes, and proves the heav'n
 He wanted, for a wealthier to enjoy !
 And now perhaps the glorious hour is come,
 When, having no stake left, no pledge t' endear
 Her int'rests, or that gives her sacred cause
 A moment's operation on his love,
 He burns with most intense and flagrant zeal
 To serve his country. Ministerial grace
 Deals him out money from the public chest ;
 Or, if that mine be shut, some private purse
 Supplies his need with a usurious loan,
 To be refunded duly, when his vote
 Well-manag'd shall have earn'd its worthy price.
 O innocent, compar'd with arts like these,
 Crape, and cock'd pistol, and the whistling ball
 Sent through the trav'ler's temples ! He, that finds
 One drop of Heav'n's sweet mercy in his cup,
 Can dig, beg, rot, and perish, well content,
 So he may wrap himself in honest rags
 At his last gasp ; but could not for a world
 Fish up his dirty and dependent bread
 From pools and ditches of the commonwealth,
 Sordid and sick'ning at his own success.

Ambition, av'rice, penury incurr'd
 By endless riot, vanity, the lust
 Of pleasure and variety, despatch,
 As duly as the swallows disappear,

The world of wand'ring knights and squires to town.
London ingulfs them all ! The shark is there,
And the shark's prey ; the spendthrift, and the leech
That sucks him : there the sycophant, and he
Who, with bareheaded and obsequious bows,
Begs a warm office, doom'd to a cold jail
And groat per diem, if his patron frown.
The levee swarms, as if in golden pomp
Were character'd on ev'ry statesman's door,
' *Batter'd and bankrupt fortunes mended here.*
These are the charms, that sully and eclipse
The charms of nature. 'Tis the cruel gripe,
That lean, hard-handed Poverty inflicts,
The hope of better things, the chance to win,
The wish to shine, the thirst to be amus'd,
That at the sound of Winter's hoary wing
Unpeople all our counties of such herds
Of flutt'ring, loit'ring, cringing, begging, loose,
And wanton vagrants, as make London, vast
And boundless as it is, a crowded coop.

O thou, resort and mart of all the earth,
Checker'd with all complexions of mankind,
And spotted with all crimes ; in whom I see
Much that I love, and more that I admire,
And all that I abhor ; thou freckled fair,
That pleasest and yet shock'st me, I can laugh,
And I can weep, can hope, and can despond,
Feel wrath and pity, when I think on thee !
Ten righteous would have sav'd a city once,
And thou hast many righteous.—Well for thee—
That salt preserves thee ; more corrupted else,
And therefore more obnoxious, at this hour,
Than Sodom in her day had pow'r to be,
For whom God heard his Abr'ham plead in vain

THE TASK.

BOOK IV.

THE WINTER EVENING.

Argument of the Fourth Book.

The post comes in.—The newspaper is read.—The world contemplated at a distance—Address to Winter.—The amusements of a rural winter evening compared with the fashionable ones.—Address to Evening.—A brown study.—Fall of snow in the evening.—The waggoner.—A poor family-piece.—The rural thief.—Public houses.—The multitude of them censured.—The farmer's daughter: what she was—what she is.—The simplicity of country manners almost lost.—Causes of the change.—Desertion of the country by the rich.—Neglect of magistrates.—The militia principally in fault.—The new recruit and his transformation.—Reflection on bodies corporate.—The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguished.

HARK ! 'tis the twanging horn o'er yonder bridge,
That with its wearisome but needful length
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright ;—
He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist, and frozen locks;
News from all nations lumb'ring at his back.
True to his charge, the close-pack'd load behind,
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destin'd inn ;
And, having dropp'd th' expected bag, pass on.
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold and yet cheerful : messenger of grief
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some ;
To him indiff'rent whether grief or joy.
Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,
Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
With tears, that trickled down the writer's cheeks
Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,

Or charg'd with am'rous sighs of absent swains,
Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
But O th' important budget ! usher'd in
With such heart-shaking music, who can say
What are its tidings ? have our troops awak'd ?
Or do they still, as if with opium drugg'd,
Snore to the murmurs of th' Atlantic wave ?
Is India free ? and does she wear her plum'd
And jewell'd turban with a smile of peace,
Or do we grind her still ? The grand debate,
The popular harangue, the tart reply,
The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,
And the loud laugh—I long to know them all ;
I burn to set th' imprison'd wranglers free,
And give them voice and utt'rance once again.

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And, while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful ev'ning in.
Not such his ev'ning, who with shining face
Sweats in the crowded theatre, and, squeez'd
And bor'd with elbow-points through both his sides,
Outcolds the ranting actor on the stage :
Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb,
And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
Of patriots, bursting with heroic rage,
Or placemen, all tranquillity and smiles.
This folio of four pages, happy work !
Which not e'en critics criticise ; that holds
Inquisitive Attention, while I read,
Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,
'Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break ;
What is it, but a map of busy life,
Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns ?
Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge,
That tempts Ambition. On the summit see
The seals of office glitter in his eyes ;

He climbs, he pants, he grasps them ! At his heels,
Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,
And with a dex'trous jerk, soon twists him down,
And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.

Here rills of oily eloquence in soft
Meanders lubricate the course they take ;
The modest speaker is ashamed and griev'd,
T' engross a moment's notice ; and yet begs,
Begg a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,
However trivial all that he conceives.

Sweet bashfulness ! it claims at least this praise ;
The dearth of information and good sense,
That it foretells us, always comes to pass.
Cat'racts of declamation thunder here ;
There forests of no meaning spread the page,
In which all comprehension wanders lost ;
While fields of pleasantries amuse us there
With merry descants on a nation's woes.
The rest appears a wilderness of strange
But gay confusion ; roses for the cheeks,
And lilies for the brows of faded age,
Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,
Heav'n, earth, and ocean, plunder'd of their sweets,
Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
Sermons, and city feasts, and fav'rite airs,
Æthereal journeys, submarine exploits,
And Katerfelto, with his hair on-end
At his own wonders, wond'ring for his bread.

'Tis pleasant, through the loopholes of retreat,
To peep at such a world ; to see the stir
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd ;
To hear the roar she sends through all her gates
At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls a soft murmur on th' uninjur'd ear.
Thus sitting, and surveying thus at ease
The globe and its concerns, I seem advanc'd
To some secure and more than mortal height,
That lib'rates and exempts me from them all.
It turns submitted to my view, turns round
With all its generations ; I behold

The tumult, and am still. The sound of war
Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me ;
Grieves, but alarms me not. I mourn the pride
And av'rice, that make man a wolf to man ;
Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats,
By which he speaks the language of his heart,
And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.
He travels and expatiates, as the bee
From flow'r to flow'r, so he from land to land ;
The manners, customs, policy, of all
Pay contribution to the store he glean ;
He sucks intelligence in ev'ry clime,
And spreads the honey of his deep research
At his return—a rich repast for me.
He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,
Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes
Discover countries, with a kindred heart
Suffer his woes, and share in his escapes ;
While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.

O Winter, ruler of th' inverted year,
Thy scatter'd hair with sleet like ashes fill'd,
Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fring'd with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapp'd in clouds,
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
But urg'd by storms along its slipp'ry way,
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
And dreaded as thou art ! Thou hold'st the sun
A pris'ner in the yet undawning east,
Short'ning his journey between morn and noon,
And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
Down to the rosy west ; but kindly still
Compensating his loss with added hours
Of social converse, and instructive ease,
And gath'ring, at short notice, in one group
The family dispersed, and fixing thought,
Not less dispers'd by daylight and its cares.
I crown thee king of intimate delights,

Fire-side enjoyments, homeborn happiness,
And all the comforts, that the lowly roof
Of undisturb'd Retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted ev'ning, know.
No rattling wheels stop short before these gates ;
No powder'd pert proficient in the art
Of sounding an alarm assaults these doors
Till the street rings ; no stationary steeds
Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the sound,
The silent circle fan themselves, and quake :
But here the needle plies its busy task,
The pattern grows, the well depicted flow'r,
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
Unfolds its bosom ; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,
And curling tendrils, gracefully dispos'd,
Follow the nimble finger of the fair ;
A wreath, that cannot fade, of flow'rs, that blow
With most success when all besides decay.
The poet's or historian's page by one
Made vocal for th' amusement of the rest ;
The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds
The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out ;
And the clear voice symphonious, yet distinct,
And in the charming strife triumphant still ;
Beguile the night, and set a keener edge
On female industry : the threaded steel
Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.
The volume clos'd, the customary rites
Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal ;
Such as the mistress of the world once found
Delicious, when her patriots of high note,
Perhaps, by moonlight, at their humble doors,
And under an old oak's domestic shade,
Enjoy'd, spare feast ! a radish and an egg.
Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,
Nor such as with a frown forbids the play
Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth :
Nor do we madly, like an impious world,
Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
That made them, an intruder on their joys,

Start at his awful name, or deem his praise
 A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,
 Exciting oft our gratitude and love,
 While we retrace with Mem'ry's pointing wand,
 That calls the past to our exact review,
 The dangers we have 'scap'd, the broken snare,
 The disappointed foe, deliv'rance found
 Unlook'd for, life preserv'd, and peace restor'd,
 Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.

O ev'nings worthy of the gods ! exclaim'd
 The Sabine bard. O ev'nings, I reply,
 More to be priz'd and coveted than yours,
 As more illumin'd, and with nobler truths,
 That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy.

Is Winter hideous in a garb like this ?
 Needs he the tragic fur, the smoke of lamps,
 The pent-up breath of an unsav'ry throng,
 To thaw him into feeling ; or the smart
 And snappish dialogue, that flippant wits
 Call comedy, to prompt him with a smile ?
 The self-complacent actor, when he views
 (Stealing a sidelong glance at a full house)
 The slope of faces from the floor to th' roof
 (As if one master-spring controll'd them all)
 Relax'd into a universal grin,
 Sees not a count'nance there that speaks of joy
 Half so refin'd or so sincere as ours.
 Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks,
 That idleness has ever yet contriv'd
 To fill the void of an unfurnish'd brain,
 To palliate dullness, and give time a shove.
 Time, as he passes us, has a dove's wing,
 Unsoil'd, and swift, and of a silken sound ;
 But the world's Time is Time in masquerade !
 Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledg'd
 With motley plumes ; and, where the peacock shows
 His azure eyes, is tinctur'd black and red
 With spots quadrangular of diamond form,
 Ensanguin'd hearts, clubs typical of strife,
 And spades, the emblem of untimely graves.

What should be and what was an hourglass once,
 Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard-mace
 Well does the work of his destructive scythe.
 Thus deck'd, he charms a world whom fashion blinds
 To his true worth, most pleas'd when idle most ;
 Whose only happy are their wasted hours.
 E'en misses, at whose age their mothers wore
 The backstring and the bib, assume the dress
 Of womanhood, sit pupils in the school
 Of card-devoted Time, and night by night
 Plac'd at some vacant corner of the board,
 Learn ev'ry trick, and soon play all the game.
 But truce with censure. Roving as I rove,
 Where shall I find an end, or how proceed ?
 As he that travels far oft turns aside,
 To view some rugged rock or mould'ring tow'r,
 Which seen delights him not ; then coming home
 Describes and prints it, that the world may know
 How far he went for what was nothing worth ;
 So I, with brush in hand, and palette spread,
 With colours mix'd for a far diff'rent use,
 Paint cards, and dolls, and ev'ry idle thing,
 That Fancy finds in her excursive flights.

Come, Ev'ning, once again, season of peace ;
 Return, sweet Ev'ning, and continue long !
 Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,
 With matron step slow moving, while the Night
 Treads on thy sweeping train ; one hand employ'd
 In letting fall the curtain of repose
 On bird and beast, the other charg'd for man
 With sweet oblivion of the cares of day :
 Not sumptuously adorn'd, nor needing aid,
 Like homely-featur'd Night, of clust'ring gems ;
 A star or two, just twinkling on thy brow,
 Suffices thee ; save that the moon is thine
 No less than hers, not worn indeed on high
 With ostentatious pageantry, but set
 With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,
 Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.
 Come then, and thou shalt find thy votr'y calm,

Or make me so. Composure is thy gift :
And, whether I devote thy gentle hours
To books, to music, or the poet's toil ;
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit ;
Or twining silken threads round iv'ry reels,
When they command whom man was born to please,
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.

Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze
With lights, by clear reflection multiplied
From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,
Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk
Whole without stooping, tow'ring crest and all,
My pleasures too begin. But me perhaps
The glowing hearth may satisfy a while
With faint illumination, that uplifts
The shadows to the ceiling, there by fits
Dancing uncouthly to the quiv'ring flame.
Not undelightful is an hour to me
So spent in parlour-twilight : such a gloom
Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,
The mind contemplative, with some new theme
Pregnant, or indispos'd alike to all.
Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial pow'rs,
That never feel a stupor, know no pause,
Nor need one ; I am conscious, and confess
Fearless, a soul that does not always think.
Me oft has Fancy ludicrous and wild
Sooth'd with a waking dream of houses, tow'rs,
Trees, churches, and strange visages, express'd
In the red cinders, while with poring eye
I gaz'd, myself creating what I saw.
Nor less amus'd have I quiescent watch'd
The sooty films, that play upon the bars
Pendulous, and foreboding in the view
Of superstition, prophesying still,
Though still deceiv'd, some stranger's near approach.
'Tis thus the understanding takes repose
In indolent vacuity of thought,
And sleeps, and is refresh'd. Meanwhile the face
Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask

Of deep deliberation, as the man
Were task'd to his full strength, absorb'd and lost.
Thus oft, reclin'd at ease, I lose an hour
At ev'ning, till at length the freezing blast,
That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons home
The recollected pow'rs ; and snapping short
The glassy threads, with which the fancy weaves
Her brittle toils, restores me to myself.
How calm is my recess ; and how the frost,
Raging abroad, and the rough wind endear
The silence and the warmth enjoy'd within !
I saw the woods and fields at close of day
A variegated show ; the meadows green,
Though faded ; and the lands, where lately wav'd
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
Upturn'd so lately by the forceful share.
I saw far off the weedy fallows smile
With verdure not unprofitable, graz'd
By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each
His fav'rite herb ; while all the leafless groves
That skirt th' horizon, wore a sable hue,
Scarce notic'd in the kindred dusk of eve.
To-morrow brings a change, a total change !
Which even now, though silently perform'd,
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face
Of universal nature undergoes.
Fast falls a fleecy show'r : the downy flakes
Descending, and, with never-ceasing lapse,
Softly alighting upon all below,
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives
Gladly the thick'ning mantle ; and the green
And tender blade, that fear'd the chilling blast,
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.

In such a world, so thorny, and where none
Finds happiness unblighted, or, if found,
Without some thistly sorrow at its side,
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
Against the law of love, to measure lots
With less distinguish'd than ourselves ; that thus
We may with patience bear our mod'rate ills,

And sympathise with others suff'ring more.
Ill fares the trav'ler now, and he that stalks
In pond'rous boots beside his reeking team.
The wain goes heavily, impeded sore
By congregated loads adhering close
To the clogg'd wheels ; and in its sluggish pace
Noiseless appears a moving hill of snow.
The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,
While ev'ry breath, by respiration strong
Forc'd downward, is consolidated soon
Upon their jutting chests. He, form'd to bear
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,
With half-shut eyes, and pucker'd cheeks, and teeth
Presented bare against the storm, plods on.
One hand secures his hat, save when with both
He brandishes his pliant length of whip,
Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.
O happy ; and in my account denied
The sensibility of pain, with which
Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou !
Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpair'd.
The learned finger never need explore
Thy vig'rous pulse ; and the unhealthful east,
That breathes the spleen, and searches ev'ry bone
Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee.
Thy days roll on exempt from household care ;
Thy waggon is thy wife ; and the poor beasts,
That drag the dull companion to and fro,
Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.
Ah treat them kindly ! rude as thou appear'st,
Yet show that thou hast mercy ! which the great,
With needless hurry whirl'd from place to place,
Humane as they would seem, not always show.
Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat,
Such claim compassion in a night like this,
And have a friend in ev'ry feeling heart.
Warm'd, while it lasts, by labour, all day long
They brave the season, and yet find at eve,
Ill clad and fed but sparely, time to cool.

The frugal housewife trembles when she lights
Her scanty stock of brushwood, blazing clear,
But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.
The few small embers left she nurses well ;
And, while her infant race, with outspread hands,
And crowded knees sit cowering o'er the sparks,
Retires, content to quake, so they be warm'd.
The man feels least, as more inur'd than she
To winter, and the current in his veins
More briskly mov'd by his severer toil ;
Yet he too finds his own distress in theirs.
The taper soon extinguish'd, which I saw
Dangled along at the cold finger's end
Just when the day declin'd ; and the brown loaf
Lodg'd on the shelf, half-eaten without sauce
Of sav'ry cheese, or butter, costlier still ;
Sleep seems their only refuge : for, alas,
Where penury is felt the thought is chain'd,
And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few.
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care
Ingenious Parsimony takes, but just
Saves the small inventory, bed, and stool,
Skillet and old carv'd chest, from public sale.
They live, and live without extorted alms
From grudging hands ; but other boast have none,
To sooth their honest pride, that scorns to beg,
Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.
I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,
For ye are worthy ; choosing rather far
A dry but independent crust, hard earn'd,
And eaten with a sigh, than to endure
The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs
Of knaves in office, partial in the work
Of distribution ; lib'ral of their aid
To clam'rous Importunity in rags,
But oftentimes deaf to suppliants, who would blush
To wear a tatter'd garb however coarse,
Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth :
These ask with painful shyness, and, refus'd
Because deserving, silently retire !

But be ye of good courage ! Time itself
Shall much befriend you. Time shall give increase ;
And all your num'rous progeny, well-train'd
But helpless, in few years shall find their hands,
And labour too. Meanwhile ye shall not want
What, conscious of your virtues, we can spare,
Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may send.
I mean the man, who, when the distant poor
Need help, denies them nothing but his name.

But poverty with most, who whimper forth
Their long complaints, is self-inflicted wo ;
The effect of laziness or sottish waste.
Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad
For plunder ; much solicitous how best
He may compensate for a day of sloth
By works of darkness and nocturnal wrong.
Wo to the gard'ner's pale, the farmer's hedge,
Plash'd neatly, and secur'd with driven stakes
Deep in the loamy bank. Uptorn by strength,
Resistless in so bad a cause, but lame
To better deeds, he bundles up the spoil,
An ass's burthen, and, when laden most
And heaviest, light of foot steals fast away.
Nor does the boarded hovel better guard
The well-stalk'd pile of riven logs and roots
From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave
Unwrench'd the door, however well secur'd,
Where Chanticleer amidst his haram sleeps
In unsuspecting pomp. 'Twitch'd from the perch,
He gives the princely bird, with all his wives,
To his voracious bag, strugg'ling in vain,
And loudly wond'ring at the sudden change.
Nor this to feed his own. 'Twere some excuse,
Did pity of their suff'rings warp aside
His principle, and tempt him into sin
For their support, so destitute. But they
Neglected pine at home ; themselves, as more
Expos'd than others, with less scruple made
His victims, robb'd of their defenceless all.
Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchless thirst

Of ruinous ebriety, that prompts
His ev'ry action, and imbrutes the man.
O for a law to noose the villain's neck,
Who starves his own ; who persecutes the blood
He gave them in his children's veins, and hates
And wrongs the woman he has sworn to love !

Pass where we may, through city or through town,
Village, or hamlet, of this merry land,
Though lean and beggar'd, ev'ry twentieth pace
Conducts th' unguarded nose to such a whiff
Of stale debauch, forth issuing from the styes
That Law has licens'd, as makes Temp'rance reel.
There sit, involv'd and lost in curling clouds
Of Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,
The lackey, and the groom : The craftsman there
Takes a Lethean leave of all his toil ;
Smith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the shears,
And he that kneads the dough ; all loud alike,
All learned, and all drunk ! the fiddle screams
Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wail'd
Its wasted tones and harmony unheard :
Fierce the dispute whate'er the theme ; while she,
Fell Discord, arbitress of such debate,
Perch'd on the signpost, holds with even hand
Her undecisive scales. In this she lays
A weight of ignorance ; in that, of pride ;
And smiles delighted with th' eternal poise.
Dire is the frequent curse, and its twin sound,
The cheek-distending oath, not to be prais'd
As ornamental, musical, polite,
Like those, which modern senators employ,
Whose oath is rhet'ric, and who swear for fame !
Behold the schools in which plebeian minds
Once simple are initiated in arts,
Which some may practise with politer grace,
But none with readier skill !—'tis here they learn
The road, that leads from competence and peace
To indigence and rapine ; till at last
Society, grown weary of the load,
Shakes her encumber'd lap, and casts them out.

But censure profits little : vain th' attempt
To advertise in verse a public pest,
That, like the filth with which the peasant feeds
His hungry acres, stinks, and is of use.
Th' excise is fatten'd with the rich result
Of all this riot ; and ten thousand casks,
For ever dribbling out their base contents,
Touch'd by the Midas finger of the state,
Bleed gold for ministers to sport away.
Drink, and be mad then ; 'tis your country bids !
Gloriously drunk obey th' important call !
Her cause demands th' assistance of your throats ;—
Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.

Would I had fall'n upon those happier days,
That poets celebrate ; those golden times,
And those Arcadian scenes that Maro sings,
And Sidney, warbler of poetic prose.
Nymphs were Dianas then, and swains had hearts,
That felt their virtues : Innocence, it seems,
From courts dismiss'd, found shelter in the groves ;
The footsteps of Simplicity, impress'd
Upon the yielding herbage, (so they sing)
Then were not all effac'd : then speech profane,
And manners profligate, were rarely found,
Observ'd as prodigies, and soon reclaim'd.
Vain wish ! those days were never : airy dreams
Sat for the picture : and the poet's hand,
Imparting substance to an empty shade,
Impos'd a gay delirium for a truth.
Grant it : I still must envy them an age,
That favour'd such a dream ; in days like these
Impossible, when Virtue is so scarce,
That to suppose a scene where she presides,
Is tramontane, and stumbles all belief.
No : we are polish'd now. The rural lass,
Whom once her virgin modesty and grace,
Her artless manners, and her neat attire,
So dignified, that she was hardly less
Than the fair shepherdess of old romance,
Is seen no more. The character is lost !

Her head, adorn'd with lappets: pins'd aloft,
 And ribands streaming gay, superbly rais'd,
 And magnified beyond all human size,
 Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand
 For more than half the tresses it sustains ;
 Her elbows ruffled, and her tott'ring form
 Ill-propp'd upon French heels ; she might be deem'd
 (But that the basket dangling on her arm
 Interprets her more truly) of a rank
 Too proud for dairy-work, or sale of eggs.
 Expect her soon with foot-boy at her heels,
 No longer blushing for her awkward load,
 Her train and her umbrella all her care !

The town has ting'd the country ; and the stain
 Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,
 The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs
 Down into scenes still rural ; but, alas,
 Scenes rarely grac'd with rural manners now !
 Time was when in the pastoral retreat
 Th' unguarded door was safe ; men did not watch
 T' invade another's right, or guard their own.
 Then sleep was undisturb'd by fear, unscar'd
 By drunken howlings ; and the chilling tale
 Of midnight murder was a wonder heard
 With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.
 But farewell now to unsuspecting nights,
 And slumbers unalarm'd ! Now, ere you sleep,
 See that your polish'd arms be prim'd with care,
 And drop the nightbolt ; ruffians are abroad ;
 And the first larum of the cock's shrill throat
 May prove a trumpet, summoning your ear
 To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.
 E'en daylight has its dangers ; and the walk
 Through pathless wastes and woods, unconscious once
 Of other tenants than melodious birds,
 Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold.
 Lamented change ! to which full many a cause
 Invet'rate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.
 The course of human things from good to ill,
 From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.

Increase of pow'r begets increase of wealth ;
Wealth luxury, and luxury excess ;
Excess the scrofulous and itchy plague,
That seizes first the opulent, descends
To the next rank contagious, and in time
Taints downward all the graduated scale
Of order, from the chariot to the plough.
The rich, and they that have an arm to check
The license of the lowest in degree,
Desert their office ; and themselves, intent
On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus
To all the violence of lawless hands
Resign the scenes their presence might protect.
Authority herself not seldom sleeps,
Though resident, and witness of the wrong.
The plump convivial parson often bears
The magisterial sword in vain, and lays
His rev'rence and his worship both to rest
On the same cushion of habitual sloth.
Perhaps timidity restrains his arm ;
When he should strike he trembles, and sets free,
Himself enslav'd by terror of the band,
Th' audacious convict whom he dares not bind.
Perhaps, though by profession ghostly pure,
He too may have his vice, and sometimes prove
Less dainty than becomes his grave outside
In lucrative concerns. Examine well
His milkwhite hand ; the palm is hardly clean—
But here and there an ugly smutch appears.
Foh ! 'twas a bribe that left it : he has touch'd
Corruption. Whoso seeks an audit here
Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,
Wild fowl or ven'son ; and his errand speeds.
But faster far, and more than all the rest,
A noble cause, which none, who bears a spark
Of public virtue, ever wish'd remov'd,
Works the deplor'd and mischievous effect.
'Tis universal soldiership has stabb'd
The heart of merit in the meaner class.
Arms, through the vanity and brainless rage

Of those that bear them, in whatever cause,
Seem most at variance with all moral good,
And incompatible with serious thought.
The clown, the child of nature, without guile,
Blest with an infant's ignorance of all
But his own simple pleasures ; now and then
A wrestling match, a footrace, or a fair ;
Is ballotted, and trembles at the news :
Sheepish he doffs his hat, and mumbling swears
A bible oath to be whate'er they please,
To do he knows not what. The task perform'd,
That instant he becomes the sergeant's care,
His pupil, and his torment, and his jest.
His awkward gait, his introverted toes,
Bent knees, round shoulders, and dejected looks,
Procure him many a curse. By slow degrees,
Unapt to learn, and form'd of stubborn stuff,
He yet by slow degrees puts off himself,
Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well :
He stands erect ; his slouch becomes a walk ;
He steps right onward, martial in his air,
His form, and movement ; is as smart above
As meal and larded locks can make him ; wears
His hat, or his plum'd helmet, with a grace ;
And, his three years of heroship expir'd,
Returns indignant to the slighted plough.
He hates the field, in which no fife or drum
Attends him ; drives his cattle to a march ;
And sighs for the smart comrades he has left.
'Twere well if his exterior change were all—
But with his clumsy port the wretch has lost
His ignorance and harmless manners too.
To swear, to game, to drink ; to show at home
By lewdness, idleness, and Sabbath-breach,
The great proficiency he made abroad ;
T' astonish and to grieve his gazing friends,
To break some maiden's and his mother's heart ;
To be a pest where he was useful once ;
Are his sole aim, and all his glory, now.

Man in society is like a flow'r
Blown in its native bed : 'tis there alone
His faculties, expanded in full bloom,
Shine out ; there only reach their proper use.
But man, associated and leagu'd with man
By regal warrant, or self-join'd by bond
For int'rest-sake, or swarming into clans
Beneath one head, for purposes of war,
Like flow'rs selected from the rest, and bound
And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,
Fades rapidly, and, by compression marr'd,
Contracts defilement not to be endur'd.
Hence charter'd boroughs are such public plagues ;
And burghers, men immaculate perhaps
In all their private functions, once combin'd,
Become a loathsome body, only fit
For dissolution, hurtful to the main.
Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin
Against the charities of domestic life,
Incorporated, seem at once to lose
Their nature ; and, disclaiming all regard
For mercy and the common rights of man,
Build factories with blood, conducting trade
At the sword's point, and dyeing the white robe
Of innocent commercial Justice red.
Hence too the field of glory, as the world
Misleads it, dazzled by its bright array,
With all its majesty of thund'ring pomp,
Enchanting music and immortal wreaths,
Is but a school, where thoughtlessness is taught
On principle, where foppery atones
For folly, gallantry for ev'ry vice.

But slighted as it is, and by the great
Abandon'd, and, which still I more regret,
Infected with the manners and the modes
It knew not once, the country wins me still.
I never fram'd a wish, or form'd a plan,
That flatter'd me with hopes of earthly bliss,
But there I laid the scene. There early stray'd
My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice

Had found me, or the hope of being free.
My very dreams were rural ; rural too
The first-born efforts of my youthful muse,
Sportive and jingling her poetic bells,
Ere yet her ear was mistress of their pow'rs.
No bard could please me but whose lyre was tun'd
To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats
Fatigu'd me, never weary of the pipe
Of Tityrus, assembling, as he sang,
The rustic throng beneath his fav'rite beech.
Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms :
New to my taste his Paradise surpass'd
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue,
To speak its excellence. I danc'd for joy.
I marvell'd much, that, at so ripe an age
As twice seven years, his beauties had then first
Engag'd my wonder ; and admiring still,
And still admiring, with regret suppos'd
The joy half lost, because not sooner found.
Thee too enamour'd of the life I lov'd,
Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit
Determin'd, and possessing it at last
With transports, such as favour'd lovers feel,
I studied, priz'd, and wish'd that I had known
Ingenious Cowley ! and, though now reclaim'd
By modern lights from an erroneous taste,
I cannot but lament thy splendid wit
Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools.
I still revere thee, courtly though retir'd !
Though stretch'd at ease in Chertsey's silent bow'rs,
Not unemploy'd ; and finding rich amends
For a lost world in solitude and verse.
'Tis born with all : the love of Nature's works
Is an ingredient in the compound man
Infus'd at the creation of the kind.
And, though th' Almighty Maker has throughout
Discriminated each from each, by strokes
And touches of his hand, with so much art
Diversified, that two were never found
Twins at all points—yet this obtains in all,

That all discern a beauty in his works,
And all can taste them : minds, that have been form'd
And tutor'd, with a relish more exact,
But none without some relish, none unmov'd.
It is a flame, that dies not even there,
Where nothing feeds it : neither business, crowds,
Nor habits of luxurious city-life,
Whatever else they smother of true worth
In human bosoms, quench it or abate.
The villas with which London stands begirt,
Like a swarth Indian, with his belt of beads,
Prove it. A breath of unadult'rate air,
The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer
The citizen, and brace his languid frame !
E'en in the stifling bosom of the town
A garden, in which nothing thrives, has charms,
That sooth the rich possessor ; much consol'd,
That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,
Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the well
He cultivates. These serve him with a hint,
That Nature lives ; that sight-refreshing green
Is still the liv'ry she delights to wear,
Though sickly samples of th' exub'rant whole.
What are the casements lin'd with creeping herbs,
The prouder sashes fronted with a range
Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,
The Frenchman's darling* ? are they not all proofs,
That man, immur'd in cities, still retains
His inborn inextinguishable thirst
Of rural scenes, compensating his loss
By supplemental shifts, the best he may ?
The most unfurnish'd with the means of life,
And they, that never pass their brick-wall bounds,
To range the fields, and treat their lungs with air,
Yet feel the burning instinct : over head
Suspend their crazy boxes, planted thick
And water'd duly. There the pitcher stands
A fragment, and the spoutless tea-pot there ;
Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets

* Mignonnette.

The country, with what ardour he contrives
A peep at Nature, when he can no more.

Hail, therefore, patroness of health and ease,
And contemplation, heart-consoling joys,
And harmless pleasures, in the throng'd abode
Of multitudes unknown ; hail, rural life !

Address himself who will to the pursuit
Of honours, or emolument, or fame ;
I shall not add myself to such a chase,
Thwart his attempts, or envy his success.
Some must be great. Great offices will have
Great talents. And God gives to ev'ry man
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall
Just in the niche he was ordain'd to fill.

To the deliv'rer of an injur'd land
He gives a tongue t' enlarge upon, a heart
To feel, and courage to redress her wrongs ;
To monarchs dignity ; to judges sense ;
To artists ingenuity and skill ;
To me, an unambitious mind, content
In the low vale of life, that early felt
A wish for ease and leisure, and ere long
Found here that leisure, and that ease I wish'd.

THE TASK.

BOOK V.

THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

Argument of the Fifth Book.

A frosty morning.—The foddering of cattle.—The woodman and his dog.—The poultry.—Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall.—The Empress of Russia's palace of ice.—Amusements of monarchs.—Wars, one of them.—Wars, whence.—And whence monarchy.—The evils of it.—English and French loyalty contrasted.—The Bastille, and a prisoner there.—Liberty the chief recommendation of this country.—Modern patriotism questionable, and why.—The perishable nature of the best human institutions.—Spiritual liberty not perishable.—The slavish state of man by nature.—Deliver him, Deist, if you can.—Grace must do it.—The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated.—Their different treatment.—Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free.—His relish of the works of God.—Address to the Creator.

'Tis morning ; and the sun, with ruddy orb
 Ascending, fires th' horizon ; while the clouds,
 That crowd away before the driving wind,
 More ardent as the disk emerges more,
 Resemble most some city in a blaze,
 Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray
 Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,
 And, tingeing all with his own rosy hue,
 From ev'ry herb and ev'ry spiry blade
 Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field.
 Mine, spindling into longitude immense,
 In spite of gravity, and sage remark
 That I myself am but a fleeting shade,
 Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance
 I view the muscular proportion'd limb
 Transform'd to a lean shank. The shapeless pair,
 As they design'd to mock me, at my side
 Take step for step ; and, as I near approach
 The cottage, walk along the plaster'd wall,

Prepost'rous sight ! the legs without the man.
 The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
 Beneath the dazzling deluge ; and the bents,
 And coarser grass, upspearing o'er the rest,
 Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine
 Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad,
 And, fledg'd with icy feathers, nod superb.
 The cattle mourn in corners, where the fence
 Screens them, and seem half petrified to sleep
 In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
 Their wonted fodder ; not like hung'ring man,
 Fretful if unsupplied ; but silent, meek,
 And patient of the slow-pac'd swain's delay.
 He from the stack carves out th' accustom'd load,
 Deep-plunging, and again deep-plunging oft,
 His broad keen knife into the solid mass :
 Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
 With such undeviating and even force
 He severs it away : no needless care,
 Lest storms should overset the leaning pile
 Deciduous, or its own unbalanc'd weight.
 Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcern'd
 'The cheerful haunts of man ; to wield the axe,
 And drive the wedge, in yonder forest drear,
 From morn to eve his solitary task.
 Shaggy and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears,
 And tail cropp'd short, half-lurcher and half-cur,
 His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
 Now creeps he slow ; and now, with many a frisk
 Wide-scamp'ring, snatches up the drifted snow
 With iv'ry teeth, or ploughs it with his snout ;
 Then shakes his powder'd coat, and barks for joy.
 Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl
 Moves right toward the mark ; nor stops for aught,
 But now and then with pressure of his thumb
 T' adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube,
 That fumes beneath his nose : the trailing cloud
 Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.
 Now from the roost, or from the neighb'ring pale,
 Where, diligent to catch the first faint gleam

Of smiling day, they gossip'd side by side,
Come trooping at the housewife's well-known call
The feather'd tribes domestic. Half on wing,
And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,
Conscious and fearful of too deep a plunge.
The sparrows peep, and quit the shelt'ring eaves,
To seize the fair occasion ; well they eye
The scatter'd grain, and thievishly resolv'd
T' escape th' impending famine, often scar'd
As oft return, a pert voracious kind.
Clean riddance quickly made, one only care
Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,
Or shed impervious to the blast. Resign'd
To sad necessity, the cock foregoes
His wonted strut ; and, wading at their head
With well-consider'd steps, seems to resent
His alter'd gait and stateliness retrench'd.
How find the myriads, that in summer cheer
The hills and valleys with their ceaseless songs,
Due sustenance, or where subsist they now ?
Earth yields them nought ; th' imprison'd worm is safe
Beneath the frozen clod ; all seeds of herbs
Lie cover'd close ; and berry-bearing thorns,
That feed the thrush (whatever some suppose),
Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.
The long protracted rigour of the year
Thins all their num'rous flocks. In chinks and holes
Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,
As instinct prompts ; self-buried ere they die.
The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,
Where neither grub, nor root, nor earth-nut, now
Repay's their labour more ; and perch'd aloft
By the wayside, or stalking in the path,
Lean pensioners upon the trav'ller's track,
Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,
Of voided pulse or half-digested grain.
The streams are lost amid the splendid blank,
O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood,
Indurated and fix'd, the snowy weight
Lies undissolv'd ; while silently beneath,

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And unperceiv'd, the current steals away.
Not so where, scornful of a check, it leaps
The milldam, dashes on the restless wheel,
And wantons in the pebbly gulf below :
No frost can bind it there ; its utmost force
Can but arrest the light and smoky mist,
That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.
And see where it has hung th' embroider'd banks
With forms so various, that no pow'rs of art,
The pencil or the pen, may trace the scene !
Here glitt'ring turrets rise, upbearing high
(Fantastic misarrangement !) on the roof
Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees
And shrubs of fairy land. The crystal drops,
That trickle down the branches, fast congeal'd,
Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,
And prop the pile they but adorn'd before.
Here grotto within grotto safe defies
The sunbeam ; there, emboss'd and fretted wild,
The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes
Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain
The likeness of some object seen before.
Thus Nature works as if to mock at Art,
And in defiance of her rival pow'rs ;
By these fortuitous and random strokes
Performing such inimitable feats,
As she with all her rules can never reach.
Less worthy of applause, though more admir'd,
Because a novelty, the work of man,
Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ,
Thy most magnificent and mighty freak,
The wonder of the North. No forest fell,
When thou wouldst build ; no quarry sent its stores
T' enrich thy walls : but thou didst hew the floods,
And make thy marble of the glassy wave.
In such a palace Aristæus found
Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale
Of his lost bees to her maternal ear :
In such a palace Poetry might place
The armory of Winter ; where his troops,

The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy sleet,
 Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,
 And snow, that often blinds the traveller's course,
 And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.
 Silently as a dream the fabric rose ;
 No sound of hammer or of saw was there :
 Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts
 Were soon conjoin'd, nor other cement ask'd
 Than water interfus'd to make them one.
 Lamps gracefully dispos'd, and of all hues,
 Illumin'd ev'ry side : a wat'ry light
 Gleam'd through the clear transparency, that seem'd
 Another moon new ris'n, or meteor fall'n
 From Heav'n to Earth, of lambent flame serene.
 So stood the brittle prodigy ; though smooth
 And slipp'ry the materials, yet frostbound
 Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within,
 That royal residence might well befit,
 For grandeur or for use. Long wavy wreaths
 Of flow'rs, that fear'd no enemy but warmth,
 Blush'd on the pannels. Mirror needed none
 Where all was vitreous ; but in order due
 Convivial table and commodious seat
 (What seem'd at least commodious seat) were there ;
 Sofa, and couch, and high-built throne august.
 The same lubricity was found in all,
 And all was moist to the warm touch ; a scene
 Of evanescent glory, once a stream,
 And soon to slide into a stream again.
 Alas ! 'twas but a mortifying stroke
 Of undesign'd severity, that glanc'd
 (Made by a monarch) on her own estate,
 On human grandeur and the courts of kings.
 'Twas transient in its nature, as in show
 'Twas durable ; as worthless, as it seem'd
 Intrinsically precious ; to the foot
 Treach'rous and false ; it smil'd, and it was cold.

Great princes have great playthings. Some have
 play'd
 At hewing mountains into men, and some

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At building human wonders mountain-high.
Some have amus'd the dull, sad years of life,
(Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad),
With schemes of monumental fame; and sought
By pyramids and mausolean pomp,
Shortliv'd themselves, t' immortalize their houses.
Some seek diversion in the tented field,
And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.
But war's a game, which, were their subjects wise,
Kings should not play at. Nations would do well
T' extort their truncheons from the puny hands
Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds
Are gratified with mischief; and who spoil,
Because men suffer it, their toy the World.

When Babel was confounded, and the great
Confed'racy of projectors, wild and vain,
Was split into diversity of tongues,
Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,
These to the upland, to the valley those,
God drove asunder, and assign'd their lot
To all the nations. Ample was the boon
He gave them, in its distribution fair
And equal; and he bade them dwell in peace.
Peace was a while their care: they plough'd and sow'd,
And reap'd their plenty without grudge or strife.
But violence can never longer sleep,
Than human passions please. In ev'ry heart
Are sown the sparks that kindle fiery war;
Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze.
Cain had already shed a brother's blood:
The deluge wash'd it out; but left unquench'd
The seeds of murder in the breast of man.
Soon by a righteous judgment in the line
Of his descending progeny was found
The first artificer of death; the shrewd
Contriver, who first sweated at the forge,
And forc'd the blunt and yet unbloodied steel
To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.
Him, Tubal nam'd, the Vulcan of old times,
The sword and falchion their inventor claim;

And the first smith was the first murd'rer's son.
His art surviv'd the waters ; and ere long,
When man was multiplied and spread abroad
In tribes and clans, and had begun to call
These meadows and that range of hills his own,
The tasted sweets of property begat
Desire of more, and industry in some,
T' improve and cultivate their just demesne,
Made others covet what they saw so fair.
Thus wars began on earth : these fought for spoil,
And those in self-defence. Savage at first
The onset, and irregular. At length
One eminent above the rest for strength,
For stratagem, for courage, or for all,
Was chosen leader ; him they serv'd in war,
And him in peace, for sake of warlike deeds
Reverenc'd no less. Who could with him compare ?
Or who so worthy to control themselves,
As he, whose prowess had subdu'd their foes ?
Thus war, affording field for the display
Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace,
Which have their exigencies too, and call
For skill in government, at length made king.
King was a name too proud for man to wear
With modesty and meekness ; and the crown,
So dazzling in their eyes, who set it on,
Was sure t' intoxicate the brows it bound.
It is the abject property of most,
That, being parcel of the common mass,
And destitute of means to raise themselves,
They sink, and settle lower than they need.
They know not what it is to feel within
A comprehensive faculty, that grasps
Great purposes with ease, that turns and wields
Almost without an effort, plans too vast
For their conception, which they cannot move.
Conscious of impotence they soon grow drunk
With gazing, when they see an able man
Step forth to notice : and, besotted thus,
Build him a pedestal, and say, ' Stand there,

' And be our admiration and our praise.'
 They roll themselves before him in the dust,
 Then most deserving in their own account,
 When most extravagant in his applause,
 As if exalting him they rais'd themselves.
 Thus by degrees, self-cheated of their sound
 And sober judgment, that he is but man,
 They demideify and fume him so,
 That in due season he forgets it too.
 Inflated and astrut with self-conceit,
 He gulps the windy diet ; and ere long,
 Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks
 The World was made in vain, if not for him.
 Thenceforth they are his cattle : drudges, born
 To bear his burthens, drawing in his gears,
 And sweating in his service, his caprice
 Becomes the soul that animates them all.
 He deems a thousand, or ten thousand lives,
 Spent in the purchase of renown for him,
 An easy reck'ning ; and they think the same.
 Thus kings were first invented, and thus kings
 Were burnish'd into heroes, and became
 The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp ;
 Storks among frogs, that have but croak'd and died.
 Strange, that such folly, as lifts bloated man
 To eminence fit only for a god,
 Should ever drivel out of human lips,
 E'en in the cradled weakness of the World !
 Still stranger much, that when at length mankind
 Had reach'd the sinewy firmness of their youth,
 And could discriminate and argue well
 On subjects more mysterious, they were yet
 Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear
 And quake before the gods themselves had made :
 But above measure strange, that neither proof
 Of sad experience, nor examples set
 By some, whose patriot virtue has prevail'd,
 Can even now, when they are grown mature
 In wisdom, and with philosophic deeds

Familiar, serve t' emancipate the rest !
Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone
To rev'rence what is ancient, and can plead
A course of long observance for its use,
That even servitude, the worst of ills,
Because deliver'd down from sire to son,
Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing.
But is it fit, or can it bear the shock
Of rational discussion, that a man,
Compounded and made up like other men
Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust
And folly in as ample measure meet,
As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules,
Should be a despot absolute, and boast
Himself the only freeman of his land ?
Should, when he pleases, and on whom he will,
Wage war, with any or with no pretence
Of provocation giv'n, or wrong sustain'd,
And force the beggarly last doit by means,
That his own humour dictates, from the clutch
Of Poverty, that thus he may procure
His thousands, weary of penurious life,
A splendid opportunity to die ?
Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old
Jotham ascrib'd to his assembled trees
In politic convention) put your trust
I' th' shadow of a bramble, and reclin'd
In fancied peace beneath his dang'rous branch,
Rejoice in him, and celebrate his sway,
Where find ye passive fortitude ? Whence springs
Your self-denying zeal, that holds it good,
To stroke the prickly grievance, and to hang
His thorns with streamers of continual praise ?
We too are friends to loyalty. We love
The king, who loves the law, respects his bounds,
And reigns content within them : him we serve
Freely and with delight, who leaves us free :
But recollecting still that he is man,
We trust him not too far. King though he be,

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And king in England too, he may be weak,
 And vain enough to be ambitious still;
 May exercise amiss his proper pow'rs,
 Or covet more than freemen choose to grant :
 Beyond that mark is treason. He is ours,
 T' administer, to guard, t' adorn, the state,
 But not to warp or change it. We are his,
 To serve him nobly in the common cause,
 True to the death, but not to be his slaves.
 Mark now the diff'rence, ye that boast your love
 Of kings, between your loyalty and ours.
 We love the man, the paltry pageant you :
 We the chief patron of the commonwealth,
 You the regardless author of its woes :
 We for the sake of liberty a king,
 You chains and bondage for a tyrant's sake.
 Our love is principle, and has its root
 In reason, is judicious, manly, free ;
 Yours, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod,
 And licks the foot that treads it in the dust.
 Were kingship as true treasure as it seems,
 Sterling, and worthy of a wise man's wish,
 I would not be a king to be belov'd
 Causeless, and daub'd with undiscerning praise,
 Where love is mere attachment to the throne,
 Not to the man, who fills it as he ought.
 Whose freedom is by suff'rance, and at will
 Of a superior, he is never free.
 Who lives, and is not weary of a life
 Expos'd to manacles, deserves them well.
 The state, that strives for liberty, though foil'd,
 And forc'd to abandon what she bravely sought,
 Deserves at least applause for her attempt,
 And pity for her loss. But that's a cause
 Not often unsuccessful : pow'r usurp'd
 Is weakness when oppos'd ; conscious of wrong,
 'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.
 But slaves, that once conceive the glowing thought
 Of freedom, in that hope itself possess
 All that the contest calls for ; spirit, strength,

The scene of danger, and united hearts ;
 The surest presage of the good they seek.*

Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more
 To France than all her losses and defeats,
 Old or of later date, by sea or land,
 Her house of bondage, worse than that of old
 Which God aveng'd on Pharaoh—the Bastille.
 Ye horrid tow'rs, th' abode of broken hearts ;
 Ye dungeons and ye cages of despair,
 That monarchs have supplied from age to age
 With music, such as suits their sov'reign ears,
 The sighs and groans of miserable men !
 There's not an English heart that would not leap
 To hear that ye were fall'n at last ; to know
 That e'en our enemies, so oft employ'd
 In forging chains for us, themselves were free.
 For he, who values Liberty, confines
 His zeal for her predominance within
 No narrow bounds ; her cause engages him
 Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.
 There dwell the most forlorn of humankind,
 Immur'd though unaccus'd, condemn'd untried,
 Cruelly spar'd, and hopeless of escape.
 There, like the visionary emblem seen
 By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,
 And, filletted about with hoops of brass,
 Still lives, though all its pleasant boughs are gone.
 To count the hour-bell and expect no change ;
 And ever, as the sullen sound is heard,
 Still to reflect, that, though a joyless note
 To him, whose moments all have one dull pace,
 Ten thousand rovers in the world at large
 Account it music ; that it summons some
 To theatre, or jocund feast, or ball ;
 The wearied hireling finds it a release
 From labour ; and the lover, who has chid
 Its long delay, feels ev'ry welcome stroke

* The author hopes that he shall not be censured for unnecessary warmth upon so interesting a subject. He is aware, that it is become almost fashionable to stigmatize such sentiments as no better than empty declamation ; but it is an ill symptom, and peculiar to modern times.

Upon his heart-strings, trembling with delight—
 To fly for refuge from distracting thought
 To such amusements as ingenious wo
 Contrives, hard-shifting, and without her tools—
 To read engraven on the mouldy walls,
 In stagg'ring types, his predecessor's tale,
 A sad memorial, and subjoin his own—
 To turn purveyor to an overgorg'd
 And bloated spider, till the pamper'd pest
 Is made familiar, watches his approach,
 Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend—
 To wear out time in numb'ring to and fro
 The studs, that thick emboss his iron door ;
 Then downward and then upward, then aslant
 And then alternate ; with a sickly hope
 By dint of change to give his tasteless task
 Some relish ; till the sum, exactly found
 In all directions, he begins again—
 Oh comfortless existence ! hemm'd around
 With woes, which who that suffers would not kneel
 And beg for exile, or the pangs of death ?
 That man should thus encroach on fellow man,
 Abridge him of his just and native rights,
 Eradicate him, tear him from his hold
 Upon th' endearments of domestic life
 And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,
 And doom him for perhaps a heedless word
 To barrenness, and solitude, and tears,
 Moves indignation, makes the name of king
 (Of king whom such prerogative can please)
 As dreadful as the Manichean god
 Ador'd through fear, strong only to destroy.

'Tis liberty alone that gives the flow'r
 Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume ;
 And we are weeds without it. All constraint,
 Except what wisdom lays on evil men,
 Is evil : hurts the faculties, impedes
 Their progress in the road of science ; blinds
 The eyesight of Discovery ; and begets,
 In those that suffer it, a sordid mind.

Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit
To be the tenant of man's noble form.
Thee therefore still, blameworthy as thou art,
With all thy loss of empire, and though squeez'd
By public exigence, till annual food
Fails for the craving hunger of the state,
Thee I account still happy, and the chief
Among the nations, seeing thou art free ;
My native nook of earth ! Thy clime is rude,
Replete with vapours, and disposes much
All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine :
Thine unadult'rate manners are less soft
And plausible than social life requires,
And thou hast need of discipline and art,
To give thee what politer France receives
From nature's bounty—that humane address
And sweetness, without which no pleasure is
In converse, either starv'd by cold reserve,
Or flush'd with fierce dispute, a senseless brawl.
Yet being free I love thee : for the sake
Of that one feature can be well content,
Disgrac'd as thou hast been, poor as thou art,
To seek no sublunary rest beside.
But, once enslav'd, farewell ! I could endure
Chains no where patiently ; and chains at home,
Where I am free by birthright, not at all.
Then what were left of roughness in the grain
Of British natures, wanting its excuse
That it belongs to freemen, would disgust
And shock me. I should then with double pain
Feel all the rigour of thy fickle clime ;
And, if I must bewail the blessing lost,
For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,
I would at least bewail it under skies
Milder, among a people less austere ;
In scenes, which, having never known me free,
Would not reproach me with the loss I felt.
Do I forebode impossible events,
And tremble at vain dreams ? Heav'n grant I may !
But the age of virtuous politics is past,

And we are deep in that of cold pretence.
 Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere,
 And we too wise to trust them. He that takes
 Deep in his soft credulity the stamp
 Design'd by loud declaimers on the part
 Of liberty, themselves the slaves of lust,
 Incurs derision for his easy faith,
 And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough :
 For when was public virtue to be found,
 Where private was not ? Can he love the whole,
 Who loves no part ? He be a nation's friend,
 Who is in truth the friend of no man there ?
 Can he be strenuous in his country's cause,
 Who slights the charities, for whose dear sake
 That country, if at all, must be belov'd ?

'Tis therefore sober and good men are sad
 For England's glory, seeing it wax pale
 And sickly, while her champions wear their hearts
 So loose to private duty, that no brain,
 Healthful and undisturb'd by factious fumes,
 Can dream them trusty to the gen'ral weal.
 Such were not they of old, whose temper'd blades
 Dispers'd the shackles of usurp'd control,
 And hew'd them link from link ; then Albion's sons
 Were sons indeed ; they felt a filial heart
 Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs ;
 And, shining each in his domestic sphere,
 Shone brighter still, once call'd to public view.

'Tis therefore many, whose sequester'd lot
 Forbids their interference, looking on,
 Anticipate perforce some dire event ;
 And, seeing the old castle of the state,
 That promis'd once more firmness, so assail'd,
 That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,
 Stand motionless expectants of its fall.
 All has its date below ; the fatal hour
 Was register'd in Heav'n ere time began.
 We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works
 Die too : the deep foundations that we lay,
 Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.

We build with what we deem eternal rock :
 A distant age asks where the fabric stood ;
 And in the dust, sifted and search'd in vain,
 The undiscoverable secret sleeps.

But there is yet a liberty, unsung
 By poets, and by senators unprais'd,
 Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the pow'rs
 Of earth and hell confederate, take away :
 A liberty, which persecution, fraud,
 Oppression, prisons, have no pow'r to bind ;
 Which whoso tastes can be enslav'd no more.
 'Tis liberty of heart deriv'd from Heav'n,
 Bought with *His* blood, who gave it to mankind,
 And seal'd with the same token. It is held
 By charter, and that charter sanction'd sure
 By th' unimpeachable and awful oath
 And promise of a God. His other gifts
 All bear the royal stamp, that speaks them his,
 And are august ; but this transcends them all.
 His other works, the visible display
 Of all-creating energy and might,
 Are grand no doubt, and worthy of the word,
 That, finding an interminable space
 Unoccupied, has fill'd the void so well,
 And made so sparkling what was dark before.
 But these are not his glory. Man, 'tis true,
 Smit with the beauty of so fair a scene,
 Might well suppose th' artificer divine
 Meant it eternal, had he not himself
 Pronounc'd it transient, glorious as it is,
 And, still designing a more glorious far,
 Doom'd it as insufficient for his praise.
 These therefore are occasional, and pass ;
 Form'd for the confutation of the fool,
 Whose lying heart disputes against a God ;
 That office serv'd, they must be swept away.
 Not so the labours of his love : they shine
 In other heav'ns than these that we behold,
 And fade not. There is Paradise that fears
 No forfeiture, and of its fruits he sends

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Large prelibation oft to saints below.
 Of these the first in order, and the pledge,
 And confident assurance of the rest,
 Is liberty ; a flight into his arms,
 Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way,
 A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,
 And full immunity from penal wo.

Chains are the portion of revolted man,
 Stripes, and a dungeon ; and his body serves
 The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,
 Opprobrious residence he finds them all.
 Propense his heart to idols, he is held
 In silly dotage on created things,
 Careless of their Creator. And that low
 And sordid gravitation of his pow'rs
 To a vile clod so draws him, with such force
 Resistless from the centre he should seek,
 That he at last forgets it. All his hopes
 Tend downward ; his ambition is to sink,
 To reach a depth profounder still, and still
 Profounder, in the fathomless abyss
 Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death.
 But ere he gain the comfortless repose
 He seeks, and acquiescence of his soul
 In Heav'n-renouncing exile, he endures—
 What does he not, from lusts oppos'd in vain,
 And self-reproaching conscience ? He foresees
 The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,
 Fortune, and dignity ; the loss of all
 That can ennoble man, and make frail life,
 Short as it is, supportable. Still worse,
 Far worse than all the plagues, with which his sins
 Infect his happiest moments, he forebodes
 Ages of hopeless misery. Future death,
 And death still future. Not a hasty stroke,
 Like that which sends him to the dusty grave ;
 But unrepealable enduring death.
 Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears :
 What none can prove a forg'ry may be true ;
 What none but bad men wish exploded must.

That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud
 Nor drunk enough, to drown it. In the midst
 Of laughter his compunctions are sincere ;
 And he abhors the jest by which he shines.
 Remorse begets reform. His master-lust
 Falls first before his resolute rebuke,
 And seems dethron'd and vanquish'd. Peace ensues,
 But spurious and short-liv'd ; the puny child
 Of self-congratulating Pride, begot
 On fancied Innocence. Again he falls,
 And fights again ; but finds his best essay
 A presage ominous, portending still
 Its own dishonour by a worse relapse.
 Till Nature, unavailing Nature, foil'd
 So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,
 Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now
 Takes part with appetite, and pleads the cause
 Perversely, which of late she so condemn'd ;
 With shallow shifts and old devices, worn
 And tatter'd in the service of debauch,
 Cov'ring his shame from his offended sight.

Hath God indeed giv'n appetites to man,
 And stor'd the earth so plenteously with means,
 To gratify the hunger of his wish ;
 ' And doth he reprobate, and will he damn
 ' The use of his own bounty ? making first
 ' So frail a kind, and then enacting laws
 ' So strict, that less than perfect must despair ?
 ' Falsehood ! which whoso but suspects of truth
 ' Dishonours God, and makes a slave of man.
 ' Do they themselves, who undertake for hire
 ' The teacher's office, and dispense at large
 ' Their weekly dole of edifying strains,
 ' Attend to their own music ? have they faith
 ' In what with such solemnity of tone
 ' And gesture they propound to our belief ?
 ' Nay—conduct hath the loudest tongue. The voice
 ' Is but an instrument, on which the priest
 ' May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,

• The unequivocal, authentic deed,
 • We find sound argument, we read the heart.'

Such reasonings (if that name must needs belong
 T' excuses in which reason has no part)
 Serve to compose a spirit well inclin'd,
 To live on terms of amity with vice,
 And sin without disturbance. Often urg'd,
 (As often as libidinous discourse
 Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes
 Of theological and grave import)
 They gain at last his unreserv'd assent ;
 Till, harden'd his heart's temper in the forge
 Of lust, and on the anvil of despair,
 He slights the strokes of conscience. Nothing moves,
 Or nothing much, his constancy in ill ;
 Vain tamp'ring has but foster'd his disease ;
 'Tis desp'rate, and he sleeps the sleep of death.
 Haste now, philosopher, and set him free.
 Charm the deaf serpent wisely. Make him hear
 Of rectitude and fitness, moral truth
 How lovely, and the moral sense how sure,
 Consulted and obey'd, to guide his steps
 Directly to the *first and only fair*.
 Spare not in such a cause. Spend all the pow'rs
 Of rant and rhapsody in virtue's praise :
 Be most sublimely good, verbosely grand,
 And with poetic trappings grace thy prose,
 Till it outmantle all the pride of verse.—
 Ah, tinkling cymbal, and high-sounding brass,
 Smitten in vain ! such music cannot charm
 The eclipse, that intercepts truth's heav'nly beam,
 And chills and darkens a wide-wand'ring soul.
 The *still small voice* is wanted. He must speak,
 Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect ;
 Who calls for things that are not, and they come.
 Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change,
 That turns to ridicule the turgid speech
 And stately tone of moralists, who boast,
 As if, like him of fabulous renown,

They had indeed ability to smooth
The shag of savage nature, and were each
An Orpheus, and omnipotent in song :
But transformation of apostate man
From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,
Is work for Him that made him. He alone,
And he by means in philosophic eyes
Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves
The wonder ; humanizing what is brute
In the lost kind, extracting from the lips
Of asps their venom, overpow'ring strength
By weakness, and hostility by love.

Patriots have toil'd, and in their country's cause
Bled nobly ; and their deeds, as they deserve,
Receive proud recompense. We give in charge
Their names to the sweet lyre. Th' historic muse,
Proud of the treasure, marches with it down
To latest times ; and Sculpture, in her turn,
Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass
To guard them, and t' immortalize her trust :
But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,
To those, who, posted at the shrine of Truth,
Have fall'n in her defence. A patriot's blood,
Well spent in such a strife, may earn indeed,
And for a time ensure, to his lov'd land
The sweets of liberty and equal laws ;
But martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,
And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed
In confirmation of the noblest claim,
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
To walk with God, to be divinely free,
To soar, and to anticipate the skies.
Yet few remember them. They liv'd unknown,
Till Persecution dragg'd them into fame,
And chas'd them up to Heav'n. Their ashes flew
—No marble tells us whither. With their names
No bard embalms and sanctifies his song :
And history, so warm on meaner themes,
Is cold on this. She execrates indeed

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The tyranny, that doom'd them to the fire,
But gives the glorious sufferers little praise.*

He is the freeman, whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves besides. There's not a chain,
That hellish foes, confed'rate for his harm,
Can wind around him, but he casts it off,
With as much ease as Sampson his green withes.
He looks abroad into the varied field
Of nature, and though poor perhaps, compar'd
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
Calls the delightful scen'ry all his own.
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
And the resplendent rivers : his t' enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspir'd,
Can lift to Heav'n an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say—' My father made them all !'
Are they not his by a peculiar right,
And by an emphasis of int'rest his,
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love,
That plann'd, and built, and still upholds, a world
So cloth'd with beauty for rebellious man ?
Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap
The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good
In senseless riot ; but ye will not find
In feast, or in the chase, in song or dance,
A liberty like his, who, unimpeach'd
Of usurpation, and to no man's wrong,
Appropriates nature as his Father's work,
And has a richer use of yours than you.
He is indeed a freeman. Free by birth
Of no mean city ; plann'd or ere the hills
Were built, the fountains open'd, or the sea
With all his roaring multitude of waves.
His freedom is the same in ev'ry state ;
And no condition of this changeful life,
So manifold in cares, whose ev'ry day

* See Hume.

Brings its own evil with it, makes it less ;
 For he has wings, that neither sickness, pain,
 Nor penury, can cripple or confine.

No nook so narrow but he spreads them there
 With ease, and is at large. Th' oppressor holds
 His body bound, but knows not what a range
 His spirit takes unconscious of a chain ;
 And that to bind him is a vain attempt,
 Whom God delights in, and in whom he dwells.

Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste
 His works. Admitted once to his embrace,
 Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before :
 Thine eye shall be instructed ; and thine heart
 Made pure shall relish, with divine delight
 'Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.
 Brutes graze the mountain-top, with faces prone,
 And eyes intent upon the scanty herb
 It yields them ; or, recumbent on its brow,
 Ruminates heedless of the scene outspread
 Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away
 From inland regions to the distant main.
 Man views it, and admires ; but rests content
 With what he views. The landscape has his praise,
 But not its Author. Unconcern'd who form'd
 The Paradise he sees, he finds it such,
 And, such well-pleas'd to find it, asks no more.
 Not so the mind, that has been touch'd from Heav'n,
 And in the school of sacred wisdom taught,
 To read his wonders, in whose thought the World,
 Fair as it is, existed ere it was.

Not for its own sake merely, but for his
 Much more, who fashion'd it, he gives it praise ;
 Praise that from Earth resulting, as it ought,
 To Earth's acknowledg'd Sov'reign, finds at once
 Its only just proprietor in Him.

The soul that sees him, or receives sublim'd
 New faculties, or learns at least t' employ
 More worthily the pow'rs she own'd before,
 Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze
 Of ignorance, till then she overlook'd,

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A ray of heav'nly light, gilding all forms
 Terrestrial in the vast and the minute ;
 The unambiguous footsteps of the God,
 Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
 And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.
 Much conversant with Heav'n, she often holds
 With those fair ministers of light to man,
 That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp,
 Sweet conference. Inquires what strains were they
 With which Heav'n rang, when ev'ry star, in haste
 To gratulate the new-created Earth,
 Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God
 Shouted for joy.—' Tell me, ye shining hosts,
 ' That navigate a sea that knows no storms,
 ' Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,
 ' If from your elevation, whence ye view
 ' Distinctly scenes invisible to man,
 ' And systems, of whose birth no tidings yet
 ' Have reach'd this nether world, ye spy a race
 ' Favour'd as ours ; transgressors from the womb,
 ' And hasting to a grave, yet doom'd to rise,
 ' And to possess a brighter heav'n than yours ?
 ' As one, who, long detain'd on foreign shores,
 ' Pants to return, and when he sees afar
 ' His country's weather-bleach'd and batter'd rocks,
 ' From the green wave emerging, darts an eye
 ' Radiant with joy towards the happy land ;
 ' So I with animated hopes behold,
 ' And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,
 ' That show like beacons in the blue abyss,
 ' Ordain'd to guide th' embodied spirit home
 ' From toilsome life to never-ending rest.
 ' Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires,
 ' That give assurance of their own success,
 ' And that, infus'd from Heav'n, must thither tend.'

So reads he nature, whom the lamp of truth
 Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious Word !
 Which whoso sees no longer wanders lost,
 With intellects bemaz'd in endless doubt,
 But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast built

With means, that were not till by thee employ'd,
Worlds, that had never been hadst thou in strength
Been less, or less benevolent than strong.
They are thy witnesses, who speak thy pow'r
And goodness infinite, but speak in ears
That hear not, or receive not their report.
In vain thy creatures testify of thee,
Till thou proclaim thyself. Theirs is indeed
A teaching voice ; but 'tis the praise of thine,
That whom it teaches it makes prompt to learn,
And with the boon gives talents for its use.
Till thou art heard, imaginations vain
Possess the heart, and fables false as Hell ;
Yet, deem'd oracular, lure down to death
The uninform'd and heedless souls of men.
We give to chance, blind chance, ourselves as blind,
The glory of thy work ; which yet appears
Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,
Challenging human scrutiny, and prov'd
Then skilful most when most severely judg'd.
But chance is not ; or is not where thou reign'st :
Thy providence forbids that fickle pow'r
(If pow'r she be, that works but to confound)
To mix her wild vagaries with thy laws.
Yet thus we dote, refusing while we can
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves
Gods such as guilt makes welcome ; gods that sleep,
Or disregard our follies, or that sit
Amus'd spectators of this bustling stage.
Thee we reject, unable to abide
Thy purity, till pure as thou art pure,
Made such by thee, we love thee for that cause,
For which we shunn'd and hated thee before.
Then we are free. Then liberty, like day,
Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from Heav'n
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.
A voice is heard, that mortal ears hear not,
Till thou hast touch'd them ; 'tis the voice of song,
A loud Hosanna sent from all thy works ;
Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,

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And adds his rapture to the gen'ral praise.
In that blest moment Nature, throwing wide
Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile
The author of her beauties, who, retir'd
Behind his own creation, works unseen
By the impure, and hears his pow'r denied.
Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, eternal Word !
From thee departing they are lost, and rove
At random without honour, hope, or peace.
From thee is all, that soothes the life of man,
His high endeavour, and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
But O thou bounteous Giver of all good,
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown !
Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor ;
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.

THE TASK

BOOK VI.

THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

Argument of the Sixth Book.

Bells at a distance.—Their effect.—A fine noon in winter.—A sheltered walk.—Meditation better than books.—Our familiarity with the course of nature makes it appear less wonderful than it is.—The transformation that spring effects in a shrubbery described.—A mistake concerning the course of nature corrected.—God maintains it by an unremitted act.—The amusements fashionable at this hour of the day reprov'd.—Animals happy, a delightful sight.—Origin of cruelty to animals.—That it is a great crime proved from Scripture.—That proof illustrated by a tale.—A line drawn between the lawful and unlawful destruction of them.—Their good and useful properties insisted on.—Apology for the encomiums bestowed by the author on animals.—Instances of man's extravagant praise of man.—The groans of the creation shall have an end.—A view taken of the restoration of all things.—An invocation and an invitation of Him, who shall bring it to pass.—The retired man vindicated from the charge of uselessness.—Conclusion.

THERE is in souls a sympathy with sounds,
 And as the mind is pitch'd the ear is pleas'd
 With melting airs or martial, brisk or grave;
 Some chord in unison with what we hear
 Is touch'd within us, and the heart replies.
 How soft the music of those village bells,
 Falling at intervals upon the ear
 In cadence sweet, now dying all away,
 Now pealing loud again, and louder still,
 Clear and sonorous, as the gale comes on!
 With easy force it opens all the cells
 Where Mem'ry slept. Wherever I have heard
 A kindred melody, the scene recurs,
 And with it all its pleasures and its pains.
 Such comprehensive views the spirit takes,
 That in a few short moments I retrace

(As in a map the voyager his course)
 The windings of my way through many years.
 Short as in retrospect the journey seems,
 It seem'd not always short ; the rugged path,
 And prospect oft so dreary and forlorn,
 Mov'd many a sigh at its disheart'ning length.
 Yet feeling present evils, while the past
 Faintly impress the mind, or not at all,
 How readily we wish time spent revok'd,
 That we might try the ground again, where once
 (Through inexperience, as we now perceive)
 We miss'd that happiness we might have found !
 Some friend is gone, perhaps his son's best friend,
 A father, whose authority, in show
 When most severe, and must'ring all its force,
 Was but the graver countenance of love ;
 Whose favour, like the clouds of spring, might low'r,
 And utter now and then an awful voice,
 But had a blessing in its darkest frown,
 Threat'ning at once and nourishing the plant.
 We lov'd, but not enough, the gentle hand
 That rear'd us. At a thoughtless age, allur'd
 By ev'ry gilded folly, we renounc'd
 His shelt'ring side, and wilfully forewent
 That converse, which we now in vain regret.
 How gladly would the man recall to life
 The boy's neglected sire ! a mother too,
 That softer friend, perhaps more gladly still,
 Might he demand them at the gates of death.
 Sorrow has, since they went, subdued and tam'd
 The playful humour ; he could now endure,
 (Himself grown sober in the vale of tears)
 And feel a parent's presence no restraint.
 But not to understand a treasure's worth,
 Till time has stol'n away the slighted good,
 Is cause of half the poverty we feel,
 And makes the World the wilderness it is.
 The few that pray at all pray oft amiss,
 And, seeking grace t' improve the prize they hold,
 Would urge a wiser suit than asking more.

The night was winter in his roughest mood ;
The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon
Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
And where the woods fence off the northern blast,
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
Without a cloud, and white without a speck
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.
Again the harmony comes o'er the vale ;
And through the trees I view th' embattled tow'r,
Whence all the music. I again perceive
The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
And settle in soft musings as I tread
The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms,
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.
The roof, though moveable through all its length
As the wind sways it, has yet well suffic'd,
And, intercepting in their silent fall
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.
No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.
The redbreast warbles still, but is content
With slender notes, and more than half suppress'd ;
Pleas'd with his solitude, and flitting light
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes
From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,
That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.
Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
Charms more than silence. Meditation here
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart
May give a useful lesson to the head,
And Learning wiser grow without his books.
Knowledge and Wisdom, far from being one,
Have oftentimes no connexion. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men ;
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which Wisdom builds,
Till smooth'd, and squar'd, and fitted to its place,
Does but encumber whom it seems t' enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much ;

Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.
 Books are not seldom talismans and spells,
 By which the magic art of shrewder wits
 Holds an unthinking multitude enthrall'd.
 Some to the fascination of a name
 Surrender judgment, hoodwink'd. Some the style
 Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds
 Of error leads them, by a tune entranc'd.
 While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear
 The insupportable fatigue of thought,
 And swallowing therefore without pause or choice
 The total grist unsifted, husks and all.
 But trees and rivulets, whose rapid course
 Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,
 And sheep-walks populous with bleating lambs,
 And lanes in which the primrose ere her time
 Peeps thro' the moss, that clothes the hawthorn root,
 Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and truth,
 Not shy, as in the world, and to be won
 By slow solicitation, seize at once
 The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.

What prodigies can pow'r divine perform
 More grand than it produces year by year,
 And all in sight of inattentive man?
 Familiar with th' effect we slight the cause,
 And in the constancy of nature's course,
 The regular return of genial months,
 And renovation of a faded world,
 See nought to wonder at. Should God again,
 As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race
 Of the undeviating and punctual sun,
 How would the world admire! but speaks it less
 An agency divine, to make him know
 His moment when to sink and when to rise,
 Age after age, than to arrest his course?
 All we behold is miracle; but seen
 So duly, all is miracle in vain.
 Where now the vital energy, that mov'd,
 While summer was, the pure and subtle lymph
 Through th' imperceptible meand'ring veins

Of leaf and flow'r ? It sleeps ; and th' icy touch
 Of unprolific winter has impress'd
 A cold stagnation on th' intestine tide.
 But let the months go round, a few short months,
 And all shall be restor'd. These naked shoots,
 Barren as lances, among which the wind
 Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,
 Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
 And more aspiring, and with ampler spread,
 Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.
 Then each, in its peculiar honours clad,
 Shall publish even to the distant eye
 Its family and tribe. Laburnum, rich
 In streaming gold ; syringa, iv'ry pure ;
 The scented and the scentless rose ; this red,
 And of an humbler growth, the other* tall,
 And throwing up into the darkest gloom
 Of neighb'ring cypress, or more sable yew,
 Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf
 That the wind severs from the broken wave ;
 The lilac, various in array, now white,
 Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set
 With purple spikes pyramidal, as if
 Studious of ornament, yet unresolv'd
 Which hue she most approv'd, she chose them all ;
 Copious of flow'rs the woodbine, pale and wan,
 But well compensating her sickly looks
 With never-cloying odours, early and late ;
 Hypericum all bloom, so thick a swarm
 Of flow'rs, like flies clothing her slender rods,
 That scarce a leaf appears ; mezereon too,
 Though leafless, well attir'd, and thick beset
 With blushing wreaths, investing ev'ry spray ;
 Althæa with the purple eye ; the broom,
 Yellow and bright, as bullion unalloy'd,
 Her blossoms ; and luxuriant above all
 The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,
 The deep dark green of whose unvarnish'd leaf
 Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more,

* The Guelder-rose.

The bright profusion of her scatter'd stars.—
 These have been, and these shall be in their day ;
 And all this uniform uncolour'd scene
 Shall be dismantled of its fleecy load,
 And flush into variety again.
 From dearth to plenty, and from death to life,
 Is Nature's progress, when she lectures man
 In heav'nly truth ; evincing, as she makes
 The grand transition, that there lives and works
 A soul in all things, and that soul is God.
 The beauties of the wilderness are his,
 That makes so gay the solitary place,
 Where no eye sees them. And the fairer forms,
 That cultivation glories in, are his.
 He sets the bright procession on its way,
 And marshals all the order of the year ;
 He marks the bounds, which Winter may not pass,
 And blunts his pointed fury ; in its case,
 Russet and rude, folds up the tender germ,
 Uninjur'd, with inimitable art ;
 And, ere one flow'ry season fades and dies,
 Designs the blooming wonders of the next.

Some say that in the origin of things,
 When all creation started into birth,
 The infant elements receiv'd a law,
 From which they swerve not since. That under force
 Of that controlling ordinance they move,
 And need not his immediate hand, who first
 Prescrib'd their course, to regulate it now.
 Thus dream they, and contrive to save a God
 Th' encumbrance of his own concerns, and spare
 The great artificer of all that moves
 The stress of a continual act, the pain
 Of unremitted vigilance and care,
 As too laborious and severe a task.
 So man, the moth, is not afraid, it seems,
 To span omnipotence, and measure might,
 That knows no measure, by the scanty rule
 And standard of his own, that is to-day,
 And is not ere to-morrow's sun go down.

But how should matter occupy a charge,
Dull as it is, and satisfy a law
So vast in its demands, unless impell'd
To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,
And under pressure of some conscious cause ?
The Lord of all, himself through all diffus'd,
Sustains, and is the life of all that lives.
Nature is but a name for an effect,
Whose cause is God. He feeds the sacred fire
By which the mighty process is maintain'd,
Who sleeps not, is not weary ; in whose sight
Slow circling ages are as transient days ;
Whose work is without labour ; whose designs
No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts ;
And whose beneficence no charge exhausts.
Him blind antiquity profan'd, not serv'd,
With self-taught rites, and under various names,
Female and male, Pomona, Pales, Pan,
And Flora, and Vertumnus ; peopling earth
With tutelary goddesses and gods,
That were not ; and commending as they would
To each some province, garden, field, or grove.
But all are under one. One spirit—His,
Who bore the platted thorns with bleeding brows,
Rules universal nature. Not a flow'r
But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,
Of his unrivall'd pencil. He inspires
Their balmy odours, and imparts their hues,
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,
In grains as countless as the seaside sands,
The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.
Happy who walks with him ! whom what he finds
Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flow'r,
Or what he views of beautiful or grand
In nature, from the broad majestic oak
To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
Prompts with remembrance of a present God.
His presence, who made all so fair, perceiv'd,
Makes all still fairer. As with him no scene
Is dreary, so with him all seasons please.

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Though winter had been none, had man been true,
 And earth be punish'd for its tenant's sake,
 Yet not in vengeance; as this smiling sky,
 So soon succeeding such an angry night,
 And these dissolving snows, and this clear stream
 Recov'ring fast its liquid music, prove.

Who then, that has a mind well strung and tun'd
 To contemplation, and within his reach
 A scene so friendly to his fav'rite task,
 Would waste attention at the checker'd board,
 His host of wooden warriors to and fro
 Marching and countermarching, with an eye
 As fix'd as marble, with a forehead ridg'd
 And furrow'd into storms, and with a hand
 Trembling, as if eternity were hung
 In balance on his conduct of a pin?
 Nor envies he aught more their idle sport,
 Who pant with application misapplied
 To trivial toys, and, pushing iv'ry balls
 Across the velvet level, feel a joy
 Akin to rapture, when the bauble finds
 Its destin'd goal, of difficult access.
 Nor deems he wiser him, who gives his noon
 To Miss, the mercer's plague, from shop to shop
 Wand'ring, and litt'ring with unfolded silks
 The polish'd counter, and approving none;
 Or promising with smiles to call again.
 Nor him, who by his vanity seduc'd,
 And sooth'd into a dream that he discerns
 The diff'rence of a Guido from a daub,
 Frequents the crowded auction: station'd there
 As duly as the Langford of the show,
 With glass at eye, and catalogue in hand,
 And tongue accomplish'd in the fulsome cant,
 And pedantry, that coxcombs learn with ease;
 Oft as the price-deciding hammer falls,
 He notes it in his book, then raps his box,
 Swears 'tis a bargain, rails at his hard fate,
 That he has let it pass—but never bids.

Here unmolested, through whatever sign
The sun proceeds, I wander. Neither mist,
Nor freezing sky nor sultry, checking me,
Nor stranger, intermeddling with my joy.
E'en in the spring and playtime of the year,
That calls th' unwonted villager abroad
With all her little ones, a sportive train,
To gather kingcups in the yellow mead,
And prink their hair with daisies, or to pick
A cheap but wholesome salad from the brook,
These shades are all my own. The tim'rous hare,
Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,
Scarce shuns me ; and the stockdove unalarm'd
Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends
His long love-ditty for my near approach.
Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm,
That age or injury has hollow'd deep,
Where, on his bed of wool and matted leaves,
He has outslept the winter, ventures forth
To frisk a while, and bask in the warm sun,
The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play ;
He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,
Ascends the neighb'ring beech ; there whisks his brush,
And perks his ears, and stamps, and scolds aloud,
With all the prettiness of feign'd alarm,
And anger insignificantly fierce.

The heart is hard in nature, and unfit
For human fellowship, as being void
Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike
To love and friendship both, that is not pleas'd
With sight of animals enjoying life,
Nor feels their happiness augment his own.
The bounding fawn, that darts across the glade
When none pursues, through mere delight of heart,
And spirits buoyant with excess of glee ;
The horse as wanton, and almost as fleet,
That skims the spacious meadow at full speed,
Then stops, and snorts, and, throwing high his heels,
Starts to the voluntary race again ;
The very kine, that gambol at high noon,

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The total herd receiving first from one,
That leads the dance, a summons to be gay,
Though wild their strange vagaries, and uncouth
Their efforts, yet resolv'd with one consent
To give such act and utterance, as they may
To ecstasy too big to be suppress'd—
These, and a thousand images of bliss,
With which kind Nature graces ev'ry scene,
Where cruel man defeats not her design,
Impart to the benevolent, who wish
All that are capable of pleasure pleas'd,
A far superior happiness to theirs,
The comfort of a reasonable joy.

Man scarce had ris'n, obedient to his call
Who form'd him from the dust, his future grave,
When he was crown'd as never king was since.
God set the diadem upon his head,
And angel choirs attended. Wond'ring stood
The new-made monarch, while before him pass'd,
All happy, and all perfect in their kind,
The creatures, summon'd from their various haunts,
To see their sov'reign, and confess his sway.
Vast was his empire, absolute his pow'r,
Or bounded only by a law, whose force
'Twas his sublimest privilege to feel
And own, the law of universal love.
He rul'd with meekness, they obey'd with joy ;
No cruel purpose lurk'd within his heart,
And no distrust of his intent in theirs.
So Eden was a scene of harmless sport,
Where kindness on his part, who rul'd the whole,
Begot a tranquil confidence in all,
And fear as yet was not, nor cause for fear.
But sin marr'd all ; and the revolt of man,
That source of evils not exhausted yet,
Was punish'd with revolt of his from him.
Garden of God, how terrible the change
Thy groves and lawns then witnessed ! Ev'ry heart,
Each animal, of ev'ry name, conceiv'd
A jealousy, and an instinctive fear,

And, conscious of some danger, either fled
Precipitate the loath'd abode of man,
Or growl'd defiance in such angry sort,
As taught him too to tremble in his turn.
Thus harmony and family accord
Were driv'n from Paradise ; and in that hour
The seeds of cruelty, that since have swell'd
To such gigantic and enormous growth,
Were sown in human nature's fruitful soil.
Hence date the persecution and the pain,
That man inflicts on all inferior kinds,
Regardless of their plaints. To make him sport,
To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,
Or his base gluttony, are causes good
And just in his account, why bird and beast
Should suffer torture, and the streams be dyed
With blood of their inhabitants impal'd.
Earth groans beneath the burden of a war
Wag'd with defenceless innocence, while he,
Not satisfied to prey on all around,
Adds tenfold bitterness to death by pangs
Needless, and first torments ere he devours.
Now happiest they, that occupy the scenes
The most remote from his abhorr'd resort,
Whom once, as delegate of God on earth,
They fear'd, and as his perfect image lov'd.
The wilderness is theirs, with all its caves,
Its hollow glens, its thickets, and its plains,
Unvisited by man. There they are free,
And howl and roar as likes them, uncontroll'd ;
Nor ask his leave to slumber or to play.
Wo to the tyrant, if he dare intrude
Within the confines of their wild domain :
The lion tells him—I am monarch here—
And, if he spare him, spares him on the terms
Of royal mercy, and through gen'rous scorn
To rend a victim trembling at his foot.
In measure, as by force of instinct drawn,
Or by necessity constrain'd, they live
Dependent upon man ; those in his fields,

THE WINTER WALK AT NOON. 371.

These at his crib, and some beneath his roof.
They prove too often at how dear a rate
He sells protection.—Witness at his foot
The spaniel dying for some venial fault
Under dissection of the knotted scourge ;
Witness the patient ox, with stripes and yells
Driv'n to the slaughter, goaded, as he runs,
To madness ; while the savage at his heels
Laughs at the frantic sufferer's fury, spent
Upon the guiltless passenger o'erthrown.
He too is witness, noblest of the train
That wait on man, the flight-performing horse ;
With unsuspecting readiness he takes
His murd'rer on his back, and push'd all day
With bleeding sides and flanks, that heave for life,
To the far distant goal, arrives and dies.
So little mercy shows who needs so much !
Does law, so jealous in the cause of man,
Denounce no doom on the delinquent ? None.
He lives, and o'er his brimming beaker boasts
(As if barbarity were high desert)
Th' inglorious feat, and clamorous in praise
Of the poor brute, seems wisely to suppose
The honours of his matchless horse his own.
But many a crime, deem'd innocent on earth,
Is register'd in heav'n ; and these no doubt
Have each their record, with a curse annex'd.
Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,
But God will never. When he charg'd the Jew
T' assist his foe's down-fallen beast to rise ;
And when the bush-exploring boy, that seiz'd
The young, to let the parent bird go free ;
Prov'd he not plainly, that his meaner works
Are yet his care, and have an int'rest all,
All, in the universal Father's love ?
On Noah, and in him on all mankind,
The charter was conferr'd, by which we hold
The flesh of animals in fee, and claim
O'er all we feed on pow'r of life and death.
But read the instrument, and mark it well :

Th' oppression of a tyrannous control
Can find no warrant there. Feed then, and yield
Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous, through sin,
Feed on the slain, but spare the living brute !

The Governor of all, himself to all
So bountiful, in whose attentive ear
The unfledg'd raven and the lion's whelp
Plead not in vain for pity on the pangs
Of hunger unassuag'd, has interpos'd,
Not seldom, his avenging arm, to smite
Th' injurious trampler upon nature's law,
That claims forbearance even for a brute.
He hates the hardness of a Balaam's heart ;
And, prophet as he was, he might not strike
The blameless animal, without rebuke,
On which he rode. Her opportune offence
Sav'd him, or th' unrelenting seer had died.
He sees that human equity is slack
To interfere, though in so just a cause ;
And makes the task his own. Inspiring dumb
And helpless victims with a sense so keen
Of injury, with such knowledge of their strength,
And such sagacity to take revenge,
That oft the beast has seem'd to judge the man.
An ancient, not a legendary tale,
By one of sound intelligence rehears'd
(If such who plead for Providence may seem
In modern eyes), shall make the doctrine clear.

Where England, stretch'd towards the setting sun,
Narrow and long, o'erlooks the western wave,
Dwelt young Misagathus ; a scorner he
Of God and goodness, atheist in ostent,
Vicious in act, in temper savage-fierce.
He journey'd ; and his chance was, as he went,
To join a trav'ller, of far diff'rent note,
Evander, fam'd for piety, for years
Deserving honour, but for wisdom more.
Fame had not left the venerable man
A stranger to the manners of the youth,
Whose face too was familiar to his view.

Their way was on the margin of the land,
 O'er the green summit of the rocks, whose base
 Beats back the roaring surge, scarce heard so high.
 The charity, that warm'd his heart, was mov'd
 At sight of the man-monster. With a smile
 Gentle, and affable, and full of grace,
 As fearful of offending whom he wish'd
 Much to persuade, he plied his ear with truths
 Not harshly thunder'd forth, or rudely press'd,
 But, like his purpose, gracious, kind, and sweet.
 'And dost thou dream,' th' impenetrable man
 Exclaim'd, 'that me the lullabies of age,
 'And fantasies of dotards such as thou,
 'Can cheat, or move a moment's fear in me?
 'Mark now the proof I give thee, that the brave
 'Need no such aids, as superstition leads
 'To steel their hearts against the dread of death.'
 He spoke, and to the precipice at hand
 Push'd with a madman's fury. Fancy shrinks
 And the blood thrills and curdles, at the thought
 Of such a gulf as he design'd his grave.
 But, though the felon on his back could dare
 The dreadful leap, more rational, his steed
 Declin'd the death, and wheeling swiftly round,
 Or e'er his hoof had press'd the crumbling verge,
 Baffled his rider, sav'd against his will.
 The frenzy of the brain may be redress'd
 By med'cine well applied, but without grace
 The heart's insanity admits no cure.
 Enrag'd the more, by what might have reform'd
 His horrible intent, again he sought
 Destruction, with a zeal to be destroy'd,
 With sounding whip, and rowels died in blood.
 But still in vain. The Providence, that meant
 A longer date to the far nobler beast,
 Spar'd yet again th' ignoble for his sake.
 And now, his prowess prov'd, and his sincere
 Incurable obduracy evinc'd,
 His rage grew cool; and, pleas'd perhaps t' have
 earn'd

So cheaply the renown of that attempt,
 With looks of some complacence he resum'd
 His road, deriding much the blank amaze
 Of good Evander, still where he was left
 Fix'd motionless, and petrified with dread.
 So on they far'd. Discourse on other themes
 Ensuing seem'd t' obliterate the past ;
 And tamer far for so much fury shown,
 (As is the course of rash and fiery men)
 The rude companion smil'd, as if transform'd.
 But 'twas a transient calm. A storm was near,
 An unsuspected storm. His hour was come.
 The impious challenger of Pow'r divine
 Was now to learn, that Heav'n, tho' slow to wrath,
 Is never with impunity defied.
 His horse, as he had caught his master's mood,
 Snorting, and starting into sudden rage,
 Unbidden, and not now to be controll'd,
 Rush'd to the cliff, and, having reach'd it, stood.
 At once the shock unseated him : he flew
 Sheer o'er the craggy barrier ; and, immers'd
 Deep in the flood, found, when he sought it not,
 The death he had deserv'd, and died alone.
 So God wrought double justice ; made the fool
 The victim of his own tremendous choice,
 And taught a brute the way to safe revenge.
 I would not enter on my list of friends
 (Though grac'd with polish'd manners and fine sense,
 Yet wanting sensibility) the man
 Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
 An inadvertent step may crush the snail,
 That crawls at ev'ning in the public path ;
 But he that has humanity, forewarn'd,
 Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.
 The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,
 And charg'd perhaps with venom, that intrudes,
 A visitor unwelcome, into scenes
 Sacred to neatness and repose, th' alcove,
 The chamber, or refectory, may dic :
 A necessary act incurs no blame.

Not so when, held within their proper bounds,
 And guiltless of offence, they range the air,
 Or take their pastime in the spacious field ;
 There they are privileg'd : and he that hunts
 Or harms them there is guilty of a wrong,
 Disturbs th' economy of Nature's realm,
 Who, when she form'd, design'd them an abode.
 The sum is this. If man's convenience, health,
 Or safety, interfere, his rights and claims
 Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.
 Else they are all—the meanest things that are,
 As free to live, and to enjoy that life,
 As God was free to form them at the first,
 Who in his sov'reign wisdom made them all.
 Ye, therefore, who love mercy, teach your sons
 To love it too. The springtime of our years
 Is soon dishonour'd and defil'd in most
 By budding ill, that ask a prudent hand
 To check them. But alas ! none sooner shoots,
 If unrestrain'd, into luxuriant growth,
 Than cruelty, most dev'lish of them all.
 Mercy to him, that shows it, is the rule
 And righteous limitation of its act,
 By which Heav'n moves in pard'ning guilty man ;
 And he that shows none, being ripe in years,
 And conscious of the outrage he commits,
 Shall seek it, and not find it, in his turn.

Distinguish'd much by reason, and still more
 By our capacity of Grace divine,
 From creatures, that exist but for our sake,
 Which, having serv'd us, perish, we are held
 Accountable ; and God some future day
 Will reckon with us roundly for th' abuse
 Of what he deems no mean or trivial trust.
 Superior as we are, they yet depend
 Not more on human help than we on theirs.
 Their strength, or speed, or vigilance, were giv'n
 In aid of our defects. In some are found
 Such teachable and apprehensive parts,
 That man's attainments in his own concerns,

Match'd with th' expertness of the brutes in theme,
 Are oftentimes vanquish'd, and thrown far behind.
 Some show that nice sagacity of smell,
 And read with such discernment, in the port
 And figure of the man, his secret aim,
 That oft we owe our safety to a skill
 We could not teach, and must despair to learn.
 But learn we might, if not too proud to stoop
 To quadruped instructors, many a good
 And useful quality, and virtue too,
 Rarely exemplified among ourselves ;
 Attachment never to be wear'd, or chang'd
 By any change of fortune ; proof alike
 Against unkindness, absence, and neglect ;
 Fidelity, that neither bribe nor threat
 Can move or warp ; and gratitude for small
 And trivial favours, lasting as the life,
 And glist'ning even in the dying eye.

Man praises man. Desert in arts or arms
 Wins public honour ; and ten thousand sit
 Patiently present at a sacred song,
 Commemoration-mad ; content to hear
 (O wonderful effect of music's pow'r !)
 Messiah's eulogy for Handel's sake.
 But less, methinks, than sacrifice might serve—
 (For, was it less, what heathen would have dar'd
 To strip Jove's statue of his oaken wreath,
 And hang it up in honour of a man ?)
 Much less might serve, when all that we design
 Is but to gratify an itching ear,
 And give the day to a musician's praise.
 Remember Handel ? Who, that was not born
 Deaf as the dead to harmony, forgets,
 Or can, the more than Homer of his age ?
 Yes—we remember him ; and, while we praise
 A talent so divine, remember too
 That His most holy book, from whom it came,
 Was never meant, was never us'd before,
 To buckram out the mem'ry of a man.
 But hush !—the muse perhaps is too severe ;

And with a gravity beyond the size
 And measure of th' offence, rebukes a deed
 Less impious than absurd, and owing more
 To want of judgment than to wrong design.
 So in the chapel of old Ely House,
 When wand'ring Charles, who meant to be the third,
 Had fled from William, and the news was fresh,
 The simple clerk, but loyal, did announce,
 And eke did rear right merrily, two staves,
 Sung to the praise and glory of King George !
 —Man praises man ; and Garrick's mem'ry next,
 When time had somewhat mellow'd it, and made
 The idol of our worship while he liv'd
 The God of our idolatry once more,
 Shall have its altar ; and the world shall go
 In pilgrimage to bow before his shrine.
 The theatre too small shall suffocate
 Its squeez'd contents, and more than it admits
 Shall sigh at their exclusion, and return
 Ungratified : for there some noble lord
 Shall stuff his shoulders with king Richard's bunch,
 Or wrap himself in Hamlet's inky cloak,
 And strut, and storm, and straddle, stamp and stare,
 To show the world how Garrick did not act.
 For Garrick was a worshipper himself ;
 He drew the liturgy, and fram'd the rites
 And solemn ceremonial of the day,
 And call'd the world to worship on the banks
 Of Avon, fam'd in song. Ah, pleasant proof
 That piety has still in human hearts
 Some place, a spark or two not yet extinct.
 The mulb'rry-tree was hung with blooming wreaths ;
 The mulb'rry-tree stood centre of the dance ;
 The mulb'rry-tree was hymn'd with dulcet airs ;
 And from his touchwood trunk the mulb'rry-tree
 Supplied such relics as devotion holds
 Still sacred, and preserves with pious care.
 So 'twas a hallow'd time : decorum reign'd,
 And mirth without offence. No few return'd,
 Doubtless, much edified, and all refresh'd.—

Man praises man. The rabble all alive.
From tipping benches, collars, stalls, and sties,
Swarm in the streets. The statesman of the day,
A pompous and slow-moving pageant, comes.
Some shout him, and some hang upon his car,
To gaze in's eyes, and bless him. Maidens wave
Their kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy :
While others, not so satisfied, unhorse
The gilded equipage, and, turning loose
His steeds, usurp a place they well deserve.
Why ? what has charm'd them ? Hath he sav'd the
state ?

No. Doth he purpose its salvation ? No.
Enchanting novelty, that moon at full,
That finds out ev'ry crevice of the head
That is not sound and perfect, hath in theirs
Wrought this disturbance. But the wane is near,
And his own cattle must suffice him soon.
Thus idly do we waste the breath of praise,
And dedicate a tribute, in its use
And just direction sacred, to a thing
Doom'd to the dust, or lodg'd already there.
Encomium in old time was poets' work ;
But poets, having lavishly long since
Exhausted all materials of the art,
The task now falls into the public hand ;
And I, contented with an humbler theme,
Have pour'd my stream of panegyric down
The vale of Nature, where it creeps, and winds
Among her lovely works with a secure
And unambitious course, reflecting clear,
If not the virtues, yet the worth, of brutes.
And I am recompens'd, and deem the toils
Of poetry not lost, if verse of mine
May stand between an animal and wo,
And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.

The groans of Nature in this nether world,
Which Heav'n has heard for ages, have an end.
Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,
Whose fire was kindled at the prophets' lamp,

The time of rest, the promis'd Sabbath, comes.
 Six thousand years of sorrow have well nigh
 Fulfill'd their tardy and disastrous course
 Over a sinful world ; and what remains
 Of this tempestuous state of human things
 Is merely as the working of a sea
 Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest :
 For He, whose ear the winds are, and the clouds
 The dust that waits upon his sultry march,
 When sin hath mov'd him, and his wrath is hot,
 Shall visit earth in mercy ; shall descend
 Propitious in his chariot pav'd with love ;
 And what his storms have blasted and defac'd
 For man's revolt shall with a smile repair.

Sweet is the harp of prophecy ; too sweet
 Not to be wrong'd by a mere mortal touch :
 Nor can the wonders it records be sung
 To meaner music, and not suffer loss.
 But when a poet, or when one like me,
 Happy to rove among poetic flow'rs,
 Though poor in skill to rear them, lights at last
 On some fair theme, some theme divinely fair,
 Such is the impulse and the spur he feels,
 To give it praise proportion'd to its worth,
 That not t' attempt it, arduous as he deems
 The labour, were a task more arduous still.

O scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,
 Scenes of accomplish'd bliss ! which who can see,
 Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
 His soul refresh'd with foretaste of the joy ?
 Rivers of gladness water all the earth,
 And clothe all climes with beauty ; the reproach
 Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field
 Laughs with abundance ; and the land, once lean,
 Or fertile only in its own disgrace,
 Exults to see its thistly curse repeal'd.
 The various seasons woven into one,
 And that one season an eternal spring,
 The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,
 For there is none to covet, all are full.

The lion, and the libbard, and the bear,
 Graze with the fearless flocks; all bask at noon
 Together, or all gambol in the shade
 Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.
 Antipathies are none. No foe to man
 Lurks in the serpent now: the mother sees,
 And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand
 Stretch'd forth to dally with the crested worm,
 To stroke his azure neck, or to receive
 The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.
 All creatures worship man, and all mankind
 One Lord, one Father. Error has no place:
 That creeping pestilence is driv'n away;
 The breath of Heav'n has chas'd it. In the heart
 No passion touches a discordant string,
 But all is harmony and love. Disease
 Is not: the pure and uncontaminate blood
 Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age.
 One song employs all nations; and all cry,
 'Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!'
 The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
 Shout to each other, and the mountain-tops
 From distant mountains catch the flying joy:
 Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
 Earth rolls the rapturous Hosanna round.
 Behold the measure of the promise fill'd;
 See Salem built, the labour of a God!
 Bright as a sun the sacred city shines;
 All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
 Flock to that light; the glory of all lands
 Flows into her; unbounded is her joy,
 And endless her increase. Thy rams are there,
 Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar there*:
 The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,
 And Saba's spicy groves, pay tribute there.
 Praise is in all her gates: upon her walls,
 And in her streets, and in her spacious courts

* Nebaioth and Kedar, the sons of Ishmael, and progenitors of the Arabs, in the prophetic scripture here alluded to, may be reasonably considered as representatives of the Gentiles at large.

Is heard salvation. Eastern Javs there
 Kneels with the native of the farthest west ;
 And Æthiopia spreads abroad the hand,
 And worships. Her report has travell'd forth
 Into all lands. From ev'ry clime they come
 To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy,
 O Sion ! an assembly such as earth
 Saw never, such as Heav'n stoops down to see.

Thus heav'nward all things tend. For all were once
 Perfect, and all must be at length restor'd.
 So God hath greatly purpos'd ; who would else
 In his dishonour'd works himself endure
 Dishonour, and be wrong'd without redress.
 Haste then, and wheel away a shatter'd world,
 Ye slow-revolving seasons ! we would see
 (A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet)
 A world, that does not dread and hate his laws,
 And suffer for its crime ; would learn how fair
 The creature is that God pronounces good,
 How pleasant in itself what pleases him.
 Here ev'ry drop of honey hides a sting ;
 Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flow'rs ;
 And e'en the joy, that haply some poor heart
 Derives from Heav'n, pure as the fountain is,
 Is sullied in the stream, taking a taint
 From touch of human lips, at best impure.
 O for a world in principle as chaste
 As this is gross and selfish ! over which
 Custom and prejudice shall bear no sway,
 That govern all things here, should'ring aside
 The meek and modest Truth, and forcing her
 To seek a refuge from the tongue of Strife
 In nooks obscure, far from the ways of men :
 Where Violence shall never lift the sword,
 Nor Cunning justify the proud man's wrong,
 Leaving the poor no remedy but tears :
 Where he, that fills an office, shall esteem
 Th' occasion it presents of doing good
 More than the perquisite : where Law shall speak
 Seldom, and never but as Wisdom prompts

And Equity ; not jealous more to guard
 A worthless form, than to decide aright :
 Where Fashion shall not sanctify abuse,
 Nor smooth Good-breeding (supplemental grace)
 With lean performance ape the work of Love !

Come then, and, added to thy many crowns,
 Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
 Thou who alone art worthy ! It was thine
 By ancient covenant, ere Nature's birth ;
 And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,
 And overpaid its value with thy blood.
 Thy saints proclaim thee king ; and in their hearts
 Thy title is engraven with a pen
 Dipp'd in the fountain of eternal love.
 Thy saints proclaim thee king ; and thy delay
 Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see
 The dawn of thy last advent, long desir'd,
 Would creep into the bowels of the hills,
 And flee for safety to the falling rocks.
 The very spirit of the world is tir'd
 Of its own taunting question, ask'd so long,
 ' Where is the promise of your Lord's approach ?'
 The infidel has shot his bolts away,
 Till, his exhausted quiver yielding none,
 He gleans the blunted shafts, that have recoil'd,
 And aims them at the shield of Truth again.
 The veil is rent, rent too by priestly hands,
 That hides divinity from mortal eyes ;
 And all the mysteries to faith propos'd,
 Insulted and traduc'd, are cast aside,
 As useless, to the moles and to the bats.
 They now are deem'd the faithful, and are prais'd,
 Who, constant only in rejecting thee,
 Deny thy Godhead with a martyr's zeal,
 And quit their office for their error's sake.
 Blind, and in love with darkness ! yet, e'en these
 Worthy, compar'd with sycophants, who kneel
 Thy name adoring, and then preach thee man !
 So fares thy church. But how thy church may fare
 The world takes little thought. Who will may preach,

And what they will. All pastors are alike
 To wand'ring sheep, resolv'd to follow none.
 Two gods divide them all—Pleasure and Gain :
 For these they live, they sacrifice to these,
 And in their service wage perpetual war
 With Conscience and with thee. Lust in their hearts,
 And mischief in their hands, they roam the earth,
 To prey upon each other : stubborn, fierce,
 High-minded, foaming out their own disgrace,
 Thy prophets speak of such ; and, noting down
 The features of the last degen'rate times,
 Exhibit ev'ry lineament of these.

Come then, and, added to thy many crowns,
 Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,
 Due to thy last and most effectual work,
 Thy word fulfill'd, the conquest of a world !

He is the happy man, whose life e'en now
 Shows somewhat of that happier life to come ;
 Who, doom'd to an obscure but tranquil state,
 Is pleas'd with it, and, were he free to choose,
 Would make his fate his choice ; whom peace, the fruit
 Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,
 Prepare for happiness ; bespeak him one
 Content indeed to sojourn while he must
 Below the skies, but having there his home.
 The world o'erlooks him in her busy search
 Of objects, more illustrious in her view ;
 And, occupied as earnestly as she,
 Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.
 She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not ;
 He seeks not hers, for he has prov'd them vain.
 He cannot skim the ground like summer birds
 Pursuing gilded flies ; and such he deems
 Her honours, her emoluments, her joys.
 Therefore in contemplation is his bliss,
 Whose pow'r is such, that whom she lifts from earth
 She makes familiar with a heav'n unseen,
 And shows him glories yet to be reveal'd.
 Not slothful he, though seeming unemploy'd,
 And censur'd oft as useless. Stillest streams

Oft water fairest meadows, and the bird,
 That flutters least, is longest on the wing,
 Ask him, indeed, what trophies he has rais'd,
 Or what achievements of immortal fame
 He purposes, and he shall answer—None.
 His warfare is within. There unfatigu'd
 His fervent spirit labours. There he fights,
 And there obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself,
 And never with'ring wreaths, compar'd with which,
 The laurels that a Caesar reaps are weeds.
 Perhaps the self-approving haughty world,
 That as she sweeps him with her whistling silks
 Scarce deigns to notice him, or, if she see,
 Deems him a cipher in the works of God,
 Receives advantage from his noiseless hours,
 Of which she little dreams. Perhaps she owes
 Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring,
 And plenteous harvest, to the pray'r he makes,
 When, Isaac like, the solitary saint
 Walks forth to meditate at eventide,
 And think on her, who thinks not for herself.
 Forgive him then, thou bustler in concerns
 Of little worth, an idler in the best,
 If, author of no mischief and some good,
 He seek his proper happiness by means
 That may advance, but cannot hinder, thine.
 Nor, though he tread the secret path of life,
 Engage no notice, and enjoy much ease,
 Account him an encumbrance on the state,
 Receiving benefits, and rend'ring none.
 His sphere though humble, if that humble sphere
 Shine with his fair example, and though small
 His influence, if that influence, all be spent
 In soothing sorrow, and in quenching strife,
 In aiding helpless indigence, in works,
 From which at least a grateful few derive
 Some taste of comfort in a world of woe;
 Then let the supercilious great confess
 He serves his country, recompenses well
 The state, beneath the shadow of whose vine

He sits secure, and in the scale of life
 Holds no ignoble, though a slighted, place.
 The man, whose virtues are more felt than seen,
 Must drop indeed the hope of public praise ;
 But he may boast, what few that win it can,
 That, if his country stand not by his skill,
 At least his follies have not wrought her fall.
 Polite Refinement offers him in vain
 Her golden tube, through which a sensual world
 Draws gross impurity, and likes it well,
 The neat conveyance hiding all th' offence.
 Not that he peevishly rejects a mode
 Because that world adopts it. If it bear
 The stamp and clear impression of good sense,
 And be not costly more than of true worth,
 He puts it on, and for decorum sake
 Can wear it e'en as gracefully as she.
 She judges of refinement by the eye,
 He by the test of conscience, and a heart
 Not soon deceiv'd ; aware that what is base
 No polish can make sterling ; and that vice,
 Though well perfum'd and elegantly dress'd,
 Like an unburied carcass trick'd with flow'rs,
 Is but a garnish'd nuisance, fitter far
 For cleanly riddance, than for fair attire.
 So life glides smoothly and by stealth away,
 More golden than that age of fabled gold
 Renown'd in ancient song ; not vex'd with care
 Or stain'd with guilt, beneficent, approv'd
 Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.
 So glide my life away, and so at last,
 My share of duties decently fulfill'd,
 May some disease, not tardy to perform
 Its destin'd office, yet with gentle stroke,
 Dismiss me weary to a safe retreat,
 Beneath the turf, that I have often trod.
 It shall not grieve me then, that once, when call'd
 To dress a Sofa with the flow'rs of verse,
 I play'd a while, obedient to the fair,
 With that light task ; but soon, to please her more,

Whom flow'rs alone I knew would little please,
Let fall th' unfinish'd wreath, and rov'd for fruit ;
Rov'd far, and gather'd much : some harsh, 'tis true,
Pick'd from the thorns and briers of reproof,
But wholesome, well-digested ; grateful some
To palates that can taste immortal truth ;
Insidious else, and sure to be despis'd.
But all is in His hand, whose praise I seek.
In vain the poet sings, and the world hears,
If he regard not, though divine the theme.
'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime
And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre,
To charm his ear, whose eye is on the heart ;
Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,
Whose approbation—prosper even mine.

To the REV. WM CAWTHORNE UNWIN, Rector of Stock in Essex, the Tutor of his two Sons, the following POEM, recommending Private Tuition in preference to an Education at School, is inscribed by the Author.

—◆—

TIROCINIUM:

OR,

A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.

Κεφαλαιον δη παιδιας ερθη τροφη

Plato.

Αρχη πολιτιας απασης νων τροφα

Diog. Laert.

IT is not from his form, in which we trace
 Strength join'd with beauty, dignity with grace,
 That man, the master of this globe, derives
 His right of empire over all that lives.
 That form indeed, th' associate of a mind
 Vast in its pow'rs, ethereal in its kind,
 That form, the labour of almighty skill,
 Fram'd for the service of a freeborn will,
 Asserts precedence, and bespeaks control,
 But borrows all its grandeur from the soul.
 Hers is the state, the splendour, and the throne,
 An intellectual kingdom, all her own.
 For her the Mem'ry fills her ample page
 With truths pour'd down from ev'ry distant age;
 For her amasses an unbounded store,
 The wisdom of great nations, now no more;
 Though laden, not encumber'd with her spoil;
 Laborious, yet unconscious of her toil;
 When copiously supplied, then most enlarg'd;
 Still to be fed, and not to be surcharg'd.

For her the Fancy, roving unconfin'd,
The present muse of ev'ry pensive mind,
Works magic wonders, adds a brighter hue
To Nature's scenes than Nature ever knew.
At her command winds rise, and waters roar,
Again she lays them slumb'ring on the shore ;
With flow'r and fruit the wilderness supplies,
Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp arise.
For her the Judgment, umpire in the strife,
That Grace and Nature have to wage through life,
Quick-sighted arbiter of good and ill,
Appointed sage preceptor to the Will,
Condemns, approves, and with a faithful voice
Guides the decision of a doubtful choice.

Why did the fiat of a God give birth
To yon fair Sun, and his attendant Earth ?
And, when descending he resigns the skies,
Why takes the gentler Moon her turn to rise,
Whom Ocean feels through all his countless waves,
And owns her pow'r on ev'ry shore he laves ?
Why do the seasons still enrich the year,
Fruitful and young as in their first career ?
Spring hangs her infant blossoms on the trees,
Rock'd in the cradle of the western breeze ;
Summer in haste the thriving charge receives
Beneath the shade of her expanded leaves,
Till Autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews
Dye them at last in all their glowing hues.—
'Twere wild profusion all, and bootless waste,
Pow'r misemploy'd, munificence misplac'd,
Had not its author dignified the plan,
And crown'd it with the majesty of man.
Thus form'd, thus plac'd, intelligent, and taught,
Look where you will, the wonders God has wrought,
The wildest scorner of his Maker's laws
Finds in a sober moment time to pause,
To press th' important question on his heart,
' Why form'd at all, and wherefore as thou art ?'
If man be what he seems, this hour a slave,
The next mere dust and ashes in the grave ;

Endu'd with reason only to decry
His crimes and follies with an aching eye ;
With passions, just that he may prove, with pain,
The force he spends against their fury vain ;
And if, soon after having burnt, by turns,
With ev'ry lust, with which frail Nature burns,
His being end, where death dissolves the bond,
The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond ;
Then he, of all that Nature has brought forth,
Stands self-impeach'd the creature of least worth,
And useless while he lives and when he dies,
Brings into doubt the wisdom of the skies.

Truths, that the learn'd pursue with eager thought,
Are not important always as dear-bought,
Proving at last, though told in pompous strains,
A childish waste of philosophic pains ;
But truths, on which depends our main concern,
That 'tis our shame and mis'ry not to learn,
Shine by the side of ev'ry path we tread
With such a lustre, he that runs may read.
'Tis true that, if to trifle life away
Down to the sunset of their latest day,
Then perish on futurity's wide shore
Like fleeting exhalations, found no more,
Were all that Heav'n requir'd of humankind,
And all the plan their destiny design'd,
What none could rev'rence all might justly blame,
And man would breathe but for his Maker's shame.
But reason heard, and nature well perus'd,
At once the dreaming mind is disabus'd.
If all we find possessing earth, sea, air,
Reflect his attributes, who plac'd them there,
Fulfil the purpose, and appear design'd
Proofs of the wisdom of th' all-seeing mind,
'Tis plain the creature, whom he chose t' invest
With kingship and dominion o'er the rest,
Receiv'd his nobler nature, and was made
Fit for the pow'r, in which he stands array'd ;
That first, or last, hereafter, if not here,
He too might make his author's wisdom clear,

Praise him on Earth, or, obstinately dumb,
 Suffer his justice in a world to come.
 This once believ'd, 'twere logic misapplied,
 To prove a consequence by none denied,
 That we are bound to cast the minds of youth
 Betimes into the mould of heav'nly truth,
 That taught of God they may indeed be wise,
 Nor ignorantly wand'ring miss the skies.

In early days the conscience has in most
 A quickness, which in later life is lost ;
 Preserv'd from guilt by salutary fears,
 Or guilty soon relenting into tears.
 Too careless often, as our years proceed,
 What friends we sort with, or what books we read,
 Our parents yet exert a prudent care,
 To feed our infant minds with proper fare ;
 And wisely store the nurs'ry by degrees
 With wholesome learning, yet acquir'd with ease.
 Neatly secur'd from being soil'd or torn
 Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn,
 A book (to please us at a tender age
 'Tis call'd a book, though but a single page)
 Presents the pray'r the Saviour deign'd to teach,
 Which children use, and parsons—when they preach
 Lispering our syllables, we scramble next
 Through moral narrative, or sacred text ;
 And learn with wonder how this world began,
 Who made, who marr'd, and who has ransom'd, man :
 Points, which, unless the Scripture made them plain,
 The wisest heads might agitate in vain.
 O thou, whom, borne on fancy's eager wing
 Back to the season of life's happy spring,
 I pleas'd remember, and, while mem'ry yet
 Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget ;
 Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale
 Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail ;
 Whose hum'rous vein, strong sense, and simple style,
 May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile ;
 Witty, and well employ'd, and, like thy Lord,
 Speaking in parables his slighted word ;

I name thee not, lest so despis'd a name
 Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame ;
 Yet e'en in transitory life's late day,
 That mingles all my brown with sober gray,
 Reverses the man, whose *pilgrim* marks the road,
 And guides the *progress* of the soul to God.
 'Twere well with most, if books, that could engage
 Their childhood, pleas'd them at a riper age ;
 The man, approving what had charm'd the boy,
 Would die at last in comfort, peace, and joy ;
 And not with curses on his heart, who stole
 The gem of truth from his unguarded soul.
 The stamp of artless piety impress'd
 By kind tuition on his yielding breast,
 The youth now bearded, and yet pert and raw,
 Regards with scorn, though once receiv'd with awe ;
 And, warp'd into the labyrinth of lies,
 That babblers, call'd philosophers, devise,
 Blasphemes his creed, as founded on a plan
 Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man.
 Touch but his nature in its ailing part,
 Assert the native evil of his heart,
 His pride resents the charge, although the proof*
 Rise in his forehead, and seem rank enough :
 Point to the cure, describe a Saviour's cross
 As God's expedient to retrieve his loss,
 The young apostate sickens at the view,
 And hates it with the malice of a Jew.

How weak the barrier of mere Nature proves,
 Oppos'd against the pleasures Nature loves !
 While self-betray'd, and wilfully undone,
 She longs to yield, no sooner woo'd than won.
 Try now the merits of this blest exchange
 Of modest truth for wit's eccentric range.
 Time was, he clos'd as he began the day
 With decent duty, not ashamed to pray :
 The practice was a bond upon his heart,
 A pledge he gave for a consistent part ;

* See 2 Chron. ch. xxvi. ver. 13.

Nor could he dare presumptuously displease,
 A pow'r, confess'd so lately on his knees.
 But now farewell all legendary tales,
 The shadows fly, philosophy prevails;
 Pray'r to the winds, and caution to the waves;
 Religion makes the free by nature slaves.
 Priests have invented, and the world admir'd
 What knavish priests promulgate as inspir'd;
 Till Reason, now no longer overaw'd,
 Resumes her pow'rs, and spurns the clumsy fraud;
 And, common-sense diffusing real day,
 The meteor of the Gospel dies away.
 Such rhapsodies our shrewd discerning youth
 Learn from expert inquirers after truth;
 Whose only care, might truth presume to speak,
 Is not to find what they profess to seek.
 And thus, well-tutor'd only while we share
 A mother's lectures, and a nurse's care;
 And taught at schools much mythologic stuff,*
 But sound religion sparingly enough;
 Our early notices of truth, disgrac'd,
 Soon lose their credit, and are all effac'd.

Would you your son should be a sot or dunce,
 Lascivious, headstrong, or all these at once;
 That in good time the stripling's finish'd taste
 For loose expense, and fashionable waste,
 Should prove your ruin, and his own at last;
 Train him in public with a mob of boys,
 Childish in mischief only and in noise,
 Else of a mannish growth, and five in ten
 In infidelity and lewdness men.
 There shall he learn, ere sixteen winters old,
 That authors are most useful pawn'd or sold;
 That pedantry is all that schools impart,
 But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart;

* The author begs leave to explain.—Sensible that, without such knowledge, neither the ancient poets nor historians can be tasted, or indeed understood, he does not mean to censure the pains that are taken to instruct a schoolboy in the religion of the Heathen, but merely that neglect of Christian culture which leaves him shamefully ignorant of his own.

There waiter Dick, with Bacchanalian lays,
 Shall win his heart, and have his drunken praise,
 His counsellor and bosom friend shall prove,
 And some street-pacing harlot his first love.
 Schools, unless discipline were doubly strong,
 Detain their adolescent charge too long ;
 The management of tiroes of eighteen
 Is difficult ; their punishment obscene.
 The stout tall captain, whose superior size
 The minor heroes view with envious eyes,
 Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix
 Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks.
 His pride, that scorns t' obey or to submit,
 With them is courage ; his effront'ry wit.
 His wild excursions, window-breaking feats,
 Robb'ry of gardens, quarrels in the streets,
 His hairbreadth 'scapes, and all his daring schemes,
 Transport them, and are made their fav'rite themes.
 In little bosoms, such achievements strike
 A kindred spark : they burn to do the like.
 Thus, half-accomplish'd ere he yet begin
 To show the peeping down upon his chin ;
 And, as maturity of years comes on,
 Made just th' adept that you design'd your son ;
 T' ensure the perseverance of his course,
 And give your monstrous project all its force,
 Send him to college. If he there be tam'd,
 Or in one article of vice reclaim'd,
 Where no regard of ord'nances is shown
 Or look'd for now, the fault must be his own.
 Some sneaking virtue lurks in him, no doubt,
 Where neither strumpets' charms, nor drinking-bout,
 Nor gambling practices, can find it out.
 Such youths of spirit, and that spirit too,
 Ye nurs'ries of our boys, we owe to you :
 Though from ourselves the mischief more proceeds,
 For public schools 'tis public folly feeds.
 The slaves of custom and establish'd mode,
 With packhorse constancy we keep the road,

Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny delta,
True to the jingling of our leader's bells.
To follow foolish precedents, and wink
With both our eyes, is easier than to think :
And such an age as ours balks no expense,
Except of caution, and of common-sense ;
Else sure notorious fact, and proof so plain,
Would turn our steps into a wiser train.
I blame not those, who with what care they can
O'erwatch the num'rous and unruly clan ;
Or, if I blame, 'tis only that they dare
Promise a work, of which they must despair.
Have ye, ye sage intendants of the whole,
A ubiquitous presence and control,
Elisha's eye, that, when Gehazi stray'd,
Went with him, and saw all the game he play'd ?
Yes—ye are conscious ; and on all the shelves
Your pupils strike upon, have struck yourselves.
Or if, by nature sober, ye had then,
Boys as ye were, the gravity of men ;
Ye knew at least, by constant proofs address'd
To ears and eyes, the vices of the rest.
But ye connive at what ye cannot cure,
And evils not to be endur'd, endure,
Lest pow'r exerted, but without success,
Should make the little ye retain still less.
Ye once were justly fam'd for bringing forth
Undoubted scholarship and genuine worth ;
And in the firmament of fame still shines
A glory, bright as that of all the signs,
Of poets rais'd by you, and statesmen, and divines.
Peace to them all ! those brilliant times are fled,
And no such lights are kindling in their stead.
Our striplings shine indeed, but with such rays,
As set the midnight riot in a blaze ;
And seem, if judg'd by their expressive looks,
Deeper in none than in their surgeons' books.
Say muse (for, education made the song,
No muse can hesitate, or linger long),

What causes move us, knowing as we must
That these *ménageries* all fail their trust,
To send our sons to scout and scamper there,
While colts and puppies cost us so much care?

Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,
We love the playplace of our early days ;
The scene is touching, and the heart is stone,
That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.
The wall on which we tried our graving skill,
The very name we carv'd subsisting still ;
The bench on which we sat while deep employ'd,
Tho' mangled, hack'd, and hew'd, not yet destroy'd ;
The little ones, unbutton'd, glowing hot,
Playing our games, and on the very spot ;
As happy as we once, to kneel and draw
The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw ;
To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,
Or drive it devious with a dext'rous pat ;
The pleasing spectacle at once excites
Such recollection of our own delights,
That, viewing it, we seem almost t' obtain
Our innocent sweet simple years again.
This fond attachment to the well-known place,
Whence first we started into life's long race,
Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,
We feel it e'en in age, and at our latest day.
Hark ! how the sire of chits, whose future share
Of classic food begins to be his care,
With his own likeness plac'd on either knee,
Indulges all a father's heart-felt glee ;
And tells them, as he strokes their silver locks,
That they must soon learn Latin, and to box ;
Then turning he regales his list'ning wife
With all th' adventures of his early life ;
His skill in coachmanship, or driving chaise,
In bilking tavern bills, and spouting plays ;
What shifts he us'd, detected in a scrape,
How he was flogg'd, or had the luck t' escape ;
What sums he lost at play, and how he sold
Watch, seals, and all—till all his pranks are told.

Retracing thus his frolics ('tis a name
 That palliates deeds of folly and of shame),
 He gives the local bias all its sway ;
 Resolves that where he play'd his sons shall play,
 And destines their bright genius to be shown
 Just in the scene where he display'd his own.
 The meek and bashful boy will soon be taught,
 To be as bold and forward as he ought ;
 The rude will scuffle through with ease enough,
 Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough.
 Ah happy designation, prudent choice,
 Th' event is sure ; expect it ; and rejoice !
 Soon see your wish fulfill'd in either child,
 The pert made perter, and the tame made wild.

The great indeed, by titles, riches, birth,
 Excus'd th' encumbrance of more solid worth,
 Are best dispos'd of where with most success
 They may acquire that confident address,
 Those habits of profuse and lewd expense,
 That scorn of all delights but those of sense,
 Which, though in plain plebeians we condemn,
 With so much reason all expect from them.
 But families of less illustrious fame,
 Whose chief distinction is their spotless name,
 Whose heirs, their honours none; their income small,
 Must shine by true desert, or not at all,
 What dream they of, that with so little care
 They risk their hopes, their dearest treasure, there ?
 They dream of little Charles or William grac'd
 With wig prolix, down flowing to his waist ;
 They see th' attentive crowds his talents draw,
 They hear him speak—the oracle of law.
 The father, who designs his babe a priest,
 Dreams him episcopally such at least ;
 And, while the playful jockey scours the room
 Briskly, astride upon the parlour broom,
 In fancy sees him more superbly ride
 In coach with purple lin'd, and mitres on its side.
 Events improbable and strange as these,
 Which only a parental eye foresees,
 A public school shall bring to pass with ease.

But how ? resides such virtue in that air,

As must create an appetite for pray'r ?

And will it breathe into him all the zeal,

That candidates for such a prize should feel,

To take the lead and be the foremost still

In all true worth and literary skill ?

• Ah blind to bright futurity, untaught

• The knowledge of the world, and dull of thought !

• Church-ladders are not always mounted best

• By learned clerks, and Latinists profess'd.

• Th' exalted prize demands an upward look,

• Not to be found by poring on a book.

• Small skill in Latin, and still less in Greek,

• Is more than adequate to all I seek.

• Let erudition grace him, or not grace,

• I give the bauble but the second place ;

• His wealth, fame, honours, all that I intend,

• Subsist and centre in one point—a friend.

• A friend, whate'er he studies or neglects,

• Shall give him consequence, heal all defects.

• His intercourse with peers and sons of peers—

• There dawns the splendour of his future years :

• In that bright quarter his propitious skies

• Shall blush betimes, and there his glory rise.

• *Your Lordship*, and *Your Grace* ! what school can
teach

• A rhet'ric equal to those parts of speech ?

• What need of Homer's verse, or Tully's prose,

• Sweet interjections ! if he learn but those ?

• Let rev'rend churls his ignorance rebuke,

• Who starve upon a dog's-ear'd Pentateuch,

• The parson knows enough, who knows a duke.

Egregious purpose ! worthily begun

In barb'rous prostitution of your son ;

Press'd on *his* part by means, that would disgrace

A scriv'ner's clerk, or footman out of place,

And ending, if at last its end be gain'd,

In sacrilege, in God's own house profan'd.

It may succeed ; and, if his sins should call

For more than common punishment, it shall ;

The wretch shall rise, and be the thing on Earth
 Least qualified in honour, learning, worth,
 To occupy a sacred, awful post,
 In which the best and worthiest tremble most.
 The *royal letters* are a thing of course,
 A king, that would, might recommend his horse ;
 And deans, no doubt, and chapters, with one voice,
 As bound in duty, would confirm the choice.
 Behold your bishop ! well he plays his part,
 Christian in name, and infidel in heart,
 Ghostly in office, earthly in his plan,
 A slave at court, elsewhere a lady's man.
 Dumb as a senator, and as a priest
 A piece of mere church-furniture at best ;
 To live estrang'd from God his total scope,
 And his end sure, without one glimpse of hope.
 But fair although and feasible it seem,
 Depend not much upon your golden dream ;
 For Providence, that seems concern'd t' exempt
 The hallow'd bench from absolute contempt,
 In spite of all the wrigglers into place,
 Still keeps a seat or two for worth and grace ;
 And therefore 'tis, that, though the sight be rare,
 We sometimes see a Lowth or Bagot there.
 Besides, school-friendships are not always found,
 Though fair in promise, permanent and sound ;
 The most disint'rested and virtuous minds,
 In early years connected, time unbinds ;
 New situations give a diff'rent cast
 Of habit, inclination, temper, taste ;
 And he, that seem'd our counterpart at first,
 Soon shows the strong similitude revers'd.
 Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,
 And make mistakes for manhood to reform.
 Boys are at best but pretty buds unblown,
 Whose scent and hues are rather guess'd than known ;
 Each dreams that each is just what he appears,
 But learns his error in maturer years,
 When disposition, like a sail unfurl'd,
 Shows all its rents and patches to the world.

If, therefore, e'en when honest in design,
A boyish friendship may so soon decline,
'Twere wiser sure t' inspire a little heart
With just abhorrence of so mean a part,
Than set your son to work at a vile trade
For wages so unlikely to be paid.

Our public hives of puerile resort,
That are of chief and most approv'd report,
To such base hopes, in many a sordid soul,
Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.
A principle, whose proud pretensions pass
Unquestion'd, though the jewel be but glass—
That with a world, not often ever-nice,
Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice ;
Or rather a gross compound, justly tried,
Of envy, hatred, jealousy, and pride—
Contributes most perhaps t' enhance their fame ;
And emulation is its specious name.
Boys, once on fire with that contentious zeal,
Feel all the rage, that female rivals feel ;
The prize of beauty in a woman's eyes
Not brighter than in theirs the scholar's prize.
The spirit of that competition burns
With all varieties of ill by turns ;
Each vainly magnifies his own success,
Resents his fellow's, wishes it were less,
Exults in his miscarriage, if he fail,
Deems his reward too great, if he prevail,
And labours to surpass him day and night,
Less for improvement than to tickle spite.
The spur is pow'rful, and I grant its force ;
It pricks the genius forward in its course,
Allows short time for play, and none for sloth ;
And, felt alike by each, advances both ;
But judge, where so much evil intervenes,
The end, though plausible, not worth the means.
Weigh, for a moment, classical desert
Against a heart deprav'd and temper hurt ;
Hurt too perhaps for life ; for early wrong,
Done to the nobler part, affects it long ;

And you are staunch indeed in learning's cause,
If you can crown a discipline, that draws
Such mischiefs after it, with much applause.

Connexion form'd for int'rest, and endear'd
By selfish views, thus censur'd and cashier'd ;
And emulation, as engend'ring hate,
Doom'd to a no less ignominious fate :
The props of such proud seminaries fall,
The Jachin and the Boaz of them all.
Great schools rejected then, as those that swell
Beyond a size that can be manag'd well,
Shall royal institutions miss the bays,
And small academies win all the praise ?
Force not my drift beyond its just intent,
I praise a school as Pope a government ;
So take my judgment in his language dress'd,
' Whate'er is best administer'd is best.'
Few boys are born with talents that excel,
But all are capable of living well ;
Then ask not, Whether limited or large ?
But, Watch they strictly, or neglect their charge ?
If anxious only, that their boys may *learn*,
While *morals* languish, a despis'd concern,
The great and small deserve one common blame,
Diff'rent in size, but in effect the same.
Much zeal in virtue's cause all teachers boast,
Though motives of mere lucre sway the most ;
Therefore in towns and cities they abound,
For there the game they seek is easiest found ;
Though there, in spite of all that care can do,
Traps to catch youth are most abundant too.
If shrewd, and of a well constructed brain,
Keen in pursuit, and vig'rous to retain,
Your son come forth a prodigy of skill ;
As, wheresoever taught, so form'd, he will ;
The pedagogue, with self-complacent air,
Claims more than half the praise as his due share,
But if, with all his genius, he betray,
Not more intelligent than loose and gay,

Such vicious habits as disgrace his name,
 Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame;
 Though want of due restraint alone have bred
 The symptoms that you see with so much dread;
 Unenvied there, he may sustain alone
 The whole reproach, the fault was all his own.
 O 'tis a sight to be with joy perus'd,
 By all whom sentiment has not abus'd;
 New-fangled sentiment, the boasted grace
 Of those who never feel in the right place;
 A sight surpass'd by none that we can show,
 'Though Vestris on one leg still shine below;
 A father blest with an ingenuous son,
 Father, and friend, and tutor, all in one.
 How!—turn again to tales long since forgot,
 Æsop, and Phædrus, and the rest?—Why not?
 He will not blush, that has a father's heart,
 To take in childish plays a childish part;
 But bends his sturdy back to any toy,
 That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy;
 Then why resign into a stranger's hand
 A task as much within your own command,
 That God and nature, and your int'rest too,
 Seem with one voice to delegate to you?
 Why hire a lodging in a house unknown
 For one whose tend'rest thoughts all hover round
 your own?
 This second weaning, needless as it is,
 How does it lac'rate both your heart and his!
 Th' indented stick, that loses day by day
 Notch after notch, till all are smooth'd away,
 Bears witness, long ere his dismission come,
 With what intense desire he wants his home.
 But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof
 Bid fair enough to answer in the proof,
 Harmless, and safe, and nat'ral, as they are,
 A disappointment waits him even there:
 Arriv'd, he feels an unexpected change,
 He blushes, hangs his head, is shy and strange,

No longer takes, as once, with fearless ease,
His fav'rite stand between his father's knees,
But seeks the corner of some distant seat,
And eyes the door, and watches a retreat,
And, least familiar where he should be most,
Feels all his happiest privileges lost.
Alas, poor boy !—the natural effect
Of love by absence chill'd into respect.
Say, what accomplishments, at school acquir'd,
Brings he, to sweeten fruits so undesir'd ?
Thou well deserv'st an alienated son,
Unless thy conscious heart acknowledge—none ;
None that, in thy domestic snug recess,
He had not made his own with more address,
Though some perhaps, that shock thy feeling mind,
And better never learn'd, or left behind.
Add too, that, thus estrang'd, thou canst obtain
By no kind arts his confidence again ;
That here begins with most that long complaint
Of filial frankness lost, and love grown faint,
Which, oft neglected, in life's waning years
A parent pours into regardless ears.

Like caterpillars, dangling under trees
By slender threads, and swinging in the breeze,
Which filthily bewray and sore disgrace
The boughs in which are bred th' unseemly race ;
While ev'ry worm industriously weaves
And winds his web about the rivell'd leaves ;
So num'rous are the follies, that annoy
The mind and heart of ev'ry sprightly boy ;
Imaginations noxious and perverse,
Which admonition can alone disperse.
Th' encroaching nuisance asks a faithful hand,
Patient, affectionate, of high command,
To check the procreation of a breed
Sure to exhaust the plant on which they feed.
'Tis not enough, that Greek or Roman page,
At stated hours, his freakish thoughts engage ;
E'en in his pastimes he requires a friend,
To warn, and teach him safely to unbend ;

O'er all his pleasures gently to preside,
Watch his emotions, and control their tide;
And levying thus, and with an easy sway,
A tax of profit from his very play,
T' impress a value, not to be eam'd,
On moments squander'd else, and running all to waste.
And seems it nothing in a father's eye,
That unimprov'd those many moments fly?
And is he well content his son should find
No nourishment to feed his growing mind
But conjugated verbs, and nouns declin'd?
For such is all the mental food purvey'd
By public hackneys in the schooling trade;
Who feed a pupil's intellect with store
Of syntax, truly, but with little more;
Dismiss their cares, when they dismiss their flock,
Machines themselves, and govern'd by a clock.
Perhaps a father, blest with any brains,
Would deem it no abuse, or waste of pains,
T' improve this diet, at no great expense,
With sav'ry truth and wholesome common sense;
To lead his son, for prospects of delight,
To some not steep, though philosophic, height,
Thence to exhibit to his wond'ring eyes
Yon circling worlds, their distance, and their size;
The moons of Jove, and Saturn's belted ball,
And the harmonious order of them all;
To show him in an insect, or a flow'r,
Such microscopic proofs of skill and pow'r,
As, hid from ages past, God now displays,
To combat atheists with in modern days;
To spread the earth before him, and commend,
With designation of the finger's end,
Its various parts to his attentive note,
Thus bringing home to him the most remote;
To teach his heart to glow with gen'rous flame,
Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame;
And, more than all, with commendation due,
To set some living worthy in his view,

Whose fair example may at once inspire
A wish to copy what he must admire.
Such knowledge gain'd betimes, and which appears,
Though solid, not too weighty for his years,
Sweet in itself, and not forbidding sport,
When health demands it, of athletic sort,
Would make him—what some lovely boys have been,
And more than one perhaps that I have seen—
An evidence and reprehension both
Of the mere schoolboy's lean and tardy growth.

Art thou a man professionally tied,
With all thy faculties elsewhere applied,
Too busy to intend a meaner care,
Than how t' enrich thyself, and next thine heir ;
Or art thou (as though rich, perhaps thou art)
But poor in knowledge, having none t' impart :—
Behold that figure, neat, though plainly clad ;
His sprightly mingled with a shade of sad ;
Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then
Heard to articulate like other men ;
No jester, and yet lively in discourse,
His phrase well chosen, clear, and full of force ;
And his address, if not quite French in ease,
Not English stiff, but frank, and form'd to please ;
Low in the world, because he scorns its arts ;
A man of letters, manners, morals, parts ;
Unpatroniz'd, and therefore little known ;
Wise for himself and his few friends alone—
In him thy well-appointed proxy see,
Arm'd for a work too difficult for thee ;
Prepar'd by taste, by learning, and true worth,
To form thy son, to strike his genius forth ;
Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye, to prove
The force of discipline, when back'd by love ;
To double all thy pleasure in thy child,
His mind inform'd, his morals undefil'd.
Safe under such a wing, the boy shall show
No spots contracted among grooms below,
Nor taint his speech with meannesses, design'd
By footman Tom for witty and retin'd.

There, in his commerce with the liv'ried herd,
Lurks the contagion chiefly to be fear'd ;
For since (so fashion dictates) all, who claim
A higher than a mere plebeian fame,
Find it expedient, come what mischief may,
To entertain a thief or two in pay
(And they that can afford th' expense of more,
Some half a dozen, and some half a score),
Great cause occurs, to save him from a band
So sure to spoil him, and so near at hand ;
A point secur'd, if once he be supplied
With some such Mentor always at his side.
Are such men rare ? perhaps they would abound,
Were occupation easier to be found,
Were education, else so sure to fail,
Conducted on a manageable scale,
And schools, that have outliv'd all just esteem,
Exchang'd for the secure domestic scheme.—
But, having found him, be thou duke or earl,
Show thou hast sense enough to prize the pearl,
And, as thou wouldst th' advancement of thine heir
In all good faculties beneath his care,
Respect, as is but rational and just,
A man deem'd worthy of so dear a trust.
Despis'd by thee, what more can he expect
From youthful folly than the same neglect ;
A flat and fatal negative obtains
That instant upon all his future pains ;
His lessons tire, his mild rebukes offend,
And all th' instructions of thy son's best friend
Are a stream chok'd, or trickling to no end.
Doom him not then to solitary meals ;
But recollect that he has sense, and feels ;
And that, possessor of a soul refin'd,
An upright heart, and cultivated mind,
His post not mean, his talents not unknown,
He deems it hard to vegetate alone.
And, if admitted at thy board he sit,
Account him no just mark for idle wit ;

Offend not him, whom modesty restrains
From repartee, with jokes that he disdains ;
Much less transfix his feelings with an oath ;
Nor frown, unless he vanish with the cloth.—
And, trust me, his utility may reach
To more than he is hir'd or bound to teach ;
Much trash unutter'd, and some ills undone,
Through rev'rence of the censor of thy son.

But, if thy table be indeed unclean,
Foul with excess, and with discourse obscene,
And thou a wretch, whom, foll'wing her old plan,
The world accounts an honourable man,
Because forsooth thy courage has been tried,
And stood the test perhaps, on the wrong side ;
Though thou hadst never grace enough to prove
That any thing but vice could win thy love ;—
Or hast thou a polite, card-playing wife,
Chain'd to the routs that she frequents for life ;
Who, just when industry begins to snore,
Flies, wing'd with joy, to some coach-crowded door ;
And thrice in ev'ry winter throngs thine own
With half the chariots and sedans in town,
Thyself meanwhile e'en shifting as thou mayst ;
Not very sober though, nor very chaste ;
Or is thine house, though less superb thy rank,
If not a scene of pleasure, a mere blank,
And thou at best, and in thy sob'rest mood,
A trifier vain, and empty of all good ;
Though mercy for thyself thou canst have none,
Hear nature plead, show mercy to thy son.
Sav'd from his home, where ev'ry day brings forth
Some mischief fatal to his future worth,
Find him a better in a distant spot,
Within some pious pastor's humble cot,
Where vile example (yours I chiefly mean,
The most seducing, and the oft'nast seen)
May never more be stamp'd upon his breast,
Not yet perhaps incurably impress'd.
Where early rest makes early rising sure,
Disease or comes not, or finds easy cure,

Prevented much by diet neat and plain ;
 Or, if it enter, soon starv'd out again :
 Where all th' attention of his faithful host,
 Discreetly limited to two at most,
 May raise such fruits as shall reward his care,
 And not at last evaporate in air :
 Where, stillness aiding study, and his mind
 Serene, and to his duties much inclin'd,
 Not occupied in day-dreams, as at home,
 Of pleasures past, or follies yet to come,
 His virtuous toil may terminate at last
 In settled habit and decided taste.—
 But whom do I advise ? the fashion-*led*,
 Th' incorrigibly wrong, the deaf, the dead,
 Whom care and cool deliberation suit
 Not better much than spectacles a brute ;
 Who, if their sons some slight tuition share,
 Deem it of no great moment whose, or where ;
 Too proud t' adopt the thoughts of one unknown,
 And much too gay t' have any of their own.
 But courage, man ! methought the muse replied,
 Mankind are various, and the world is wide :
 The ostrich, silliest of the feather'd kind,
 And form'd of God without a parent's mind,
 Commits her eggs incautious to the dust,
 Forgetful that the foot may crush the trust ;
 And, while on public nurs'ries they rely,
 Not knowing, and too oft not caring, why,
 Irrational in what they thus prefer,
 No few, that would seem wise, resemble her.
 But all are not alike. Thy warning voice
 May here and there prevent erroneous choice ;
 And some, perhaps, who, busy as they are,
 Yet make their progeny their dearest care
 (Whose hearts will ache, once told what ills may reach
 Their offspring, left upon so wild a beach),
 Will need no stress of argument t' enforce
 Th' expedience of a less advent'rous course :
 The rest will alight thy counsel, or condemn ;
 But *they* have human feelings, turn to *them*.

To you then, tenants of life's middle state,
 Securely plac'd between the small and great,
 Whose character, yet undebauch'd, retains
 Two thirds of all the virtue that remains,
 Who, wise yourselves, desire your son should learn
 Your wisdom and your ways—to you I turn.
 Look round you on a world perversely blind ;
 See what contempt is fall'n on humankind ;
 See wealth abus'd, and dignities misplac'd,
 Great titles, offices, and trusts disgrac'd,
 Long lines of ancestry, renown'd of old,
 Their noble qualities all quench'd and cold ;
 See Bedlam's closetted and hand-cuff'd charge
 Surpass'd in frenzy by the mad at large ;
 See great commanders making war a trade,
 Great lawyers, lawyers without study made ;
 Churchmen, in whose esteem their best employ
 Is odious, and their wages all their joy,
 Who, far enough from furnishing their shelves
 With Gospel lore, turn infidels themselves ;
 See womanhood despis'd, and manhood sham'd
 With infamy too nauseous to be nam'd,
 Fops at all corners, ladylike in mien,
 Civetted fellows, smelt ere they are seen,
 Else coarse and rude in manners, and their tongues
 On fire with curses, and with nonsense hung,
 Now flush'd with drunk'ness, now with whoredom
 pale,
 Their breath a sample of last night's regale ;
 See volunteers in all the vilest arts,
 Men well endow'd, of honourable parts,
 Design'd by Nature wise, but self-made fools ;
 All these, and more like these, were bred at schools,
 And if it chance, as sometimes chance it will,
 That though school-bred, the boy be virtuous still ;
 Such rare exceptions, shining in the dark,
 Prove, rather than impeach, the just remark
 As here and there a twinkling star descried
 Serves but to show how black is all beside.

Now look on him, whose very voice in tone
Just echoes thine, whose features are thine own,
And stroke his polish'd cheek of purest red,
And lay thine hand upon his flaxen head,
And say, My boy, th' unwelcome hour is come,
When thou, transplanted from thy genial home,
Must find a colder soil and bleaker air,
And trust for safety to a stranger's care ;
What character, what turn thou wilt assume
From constant converse with I know not whom ;
Who there will court thy friendship, with what views,
And, artless as thou art, whom thou wilt choose ;
Though much depends on what thy choice shall be,
Is all chance-medley, and unknown to me.
Canst thou, the tear just trembling on thy lids,
And while the dreadful risk foreseen forbids,
Free too, and under no constraining force,
Unless the sway of custom warp thy course ;
Lay such a stake upon the losing side,
Merely to gratify so blind a guide ?
Thou canst not ! Nature, pulling at thine heart,
Condemns th' unfatherly, th' imprudent part.
Thou wouldst not, deaf to Nature's tend'rest plea,
Turn him adrift upon a rolling sea,
Nor say, *Go thither*, conscious that there lay
A brood of asps, or quicksands in his way ;
Then, only govern'd by the self-same rule
Of nat'ral pity, send him not to school.
No—guard him better. Is he not thine own,
Thyself in miniature, thy flesh, thy bone ?
And hop'st thou not ('tis ev'ry father's hope)
That, since thy strength must with thy years elope,
And thou wilt need some comfort, to assuage
Health's last farewell, a staff of thine old age,
That then, in recompense of all thy cares,
Thy child shall show respect to thy gray hairs,
Befriend thee, of all other friends bereft,
And give thy life its only cordial left ?
Aware then how much danger intervenes,
To compass that good end, forecast the means.

His heart, now passive, yields to thy command ;
Secure it thine, its key is in thine hand.

If thou desert thy charge, and throw it wide,
Nor heed what guests there enter and abide,
Complain not if attachments lewd and base
Supplant thee in it, and usurp thy place.

But, if thou guard its secret chambers sure
From vicious inmates, and delights impure,
Either his gratitude shall hold him fast,
And keep him warm and filial to the last ;

Or, if he prove unkind (as who can say
But, being man, and therefore frail, he *may* ?)

One comfort yet shall cheer thine aged heart,
Howe'er he slight thee, thou hast done thy part.

Oh, barb'rous ! wouldst thou with a Gothic hand
Pull down the schools—what !—all the schools i' th'
land ;

Or throw them up to liv'ry-nags and grooms,
Or turn them into shops and auction-rooms ?—

A captious question, sir (and yours is one),
Deserves an answer similar, or none.

Wouldst thou, possessor of a flock, employ
(Appris'd that he is such) a careless boy,
And feed him well, and give him handsome pay,
Merely to sleep, and let them run astray ?

Survey our schools and colleges, and see
A sight not much unlike my simile.

From education, as the leading cause,
The public character its colour draws ;

Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,
Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste.

And though I would not advertise them yet,
Nor write on each—*This building to be let,*

Unless the world were all prepar'd t' embrace
A plan well worthy to supply their place ;

Yet, backward as they are, and long have been,
To cultivate and keep the *morals* clean,

(Forgive the crime) I wish them, I confess,
Or better manag'd, or encourag'd less.

THE
YEARLY DISTRESS,
OR TITHING TIME AT STOCK, IN ESSEX.

Verres addressed to a country Clergyman complaining of the disagreeableness of the day annually appointed for receiving the dues at the parsonage.

COME, ponder well, for 'tis no jest,
To laugh it would be wrong,
The troubles of a worthy priest,
The burden of my song.

This priest he merry is and blithe
Three quarters of a year,
But oh ! it cuts him like a scythe,
When tithing time draws near.

He then is full of frights and fears,
As one at point to die,
And long before the day appears
He heaves up many a sigh.

For then the farmers come jog, jog,
Along the miry road,
Each heart as heavy as a log,
To make their payments good.

In sooth, the sorrow of such days
Is not to be express'd,
When he that takes and he that pays
Are both alike distress'd.

Now all unwelcome at his gates
The clumsy swains alight,
With rueful faces and bald pates—
He trembles at the sight.

And well he may, for well he knows
Each bumpkin of the clan,
Instead of paying what he owes,
Will cheat him if he can.

So in they come—each makes his leg,
 And flings his head before,
 And looks as if he came to beg,
 And not to quit a score.

‘ And how does miss and madam do,
 ‘ The little boy and all ?’
 ‘ All tight and well. And how do you,
 ‘ Good Mr What-d’ye-call ?’

The dinner comes, and down they sit :
 Were e’er such hungry folk ?
 There’s little talking, and no wit ;
 It is no time to joke.

One wipes his nose upon his sleeve,
 One spits upon the floor,
 Yet, not to give offence or grieve,
 Holds up the cloth before.

The punch goes round, and they are dull
 And lumpish still as ever ;
 Like barrels with their bellies full,
 They only weigh the heavier.

At length the busy time begins.
 ‘ Come, neighbours, we must wag—’
 The money chinks, down drop their chins,
 Each lugging out his bag.

One talks of mildew and of frost,
 And one of storms of hail,
 And one of pigs, that he has lost
 By maggots at the tail.

Quoth one, ‘ A rarer man than you
 ‘ In pulpit none shall hear :
 ‘ But yet, methinks, to tell you true,
 ‘ You sell it plaguy dear.’

O why are farmers made so coarse,
 Or clergy made so fine ?
 A kick, that scarce would move a horse,
 May kill a sound divine.

Then let the boobies stay at home ;
 'Twould cost him, I dare say,
 Less trouble taking twice the sum,
 Without the clowns that pay.

SONNET

ADDRESSED TO HENRY COWPER, ESQ.

On his emphatical and interesting delivery of the Defence of Warren Hastings, Esq. in the House of Lords.

COWPER, whose silver voice, task'd sometimes hard,
 Legends prolix delivers in the ears
 (Attentive when thou read'st) of England's peers,
 Let verse at length yield thee thy just reward.

Thou wast not heard with drowsy disregard,
 Expending late on all that length of plea
 Thy generous pow'rs ; but silence honour'd thee,
 Mute as e'er gaz'd on orator or bard.

Thou art not voice alone, but hast beside
 Both heart and head ; and couldst with music
 sweet
 Of Attic phrase and senatorial tone,
 Like thy renown'd forefathers, far and wide
 Thy fame diffuse, prais'd not for utt'rance meet
 Of *others'* speech, but *magic of thy own*.

LINES

ADDRESSED TO DR DARWIN,

Author of ' The Botanic Garden.'

Two Poets* (poets, by report,
 Not oft so well agree),
 Sweet Harmonist of Flora's court !
 Conspire to honour Thee.

* Alluding to the poem by Mr Hayley, which accompanied these lines.

They best can judge a poet's worth,
 Who oft themselves have known
 The pangs of a poetic birth
 By labours of their own.

We therefore pleas'd extol thy song,
 Though various yet complete,
 Rich in embellishment as strong,
 And learned as 'tis sweet.

No envy mingles with our praise,
 Though, could our hearts repine
 At any poet's happier lays,
 They would—they must at thine.

But we, in mutual bondage knit
 Of friendship's closest tie,
 Can gaze on even Darwin's wit
 With an unjaundic'd eye ;

And deem the Bard, whoe'er he be,
 And howsoever known,
 Who would not twine a wreath for Thee,
 Unworthy of his own.

ON

MRS MONTAGU'S FEATHER- HANGINGS.

THE birds put off their ev'ry hue,
 To dress a room for Montagu.
 The Peacock sends his heav'nly dyes,
 His *rainbows* and his *starry eyes* ;
 The Pheasant plumes, which round infold
 His mantling neck with downy gold ;
 The Cock his arch'd tail's azure show ;
 And, river-blanch'd, the Swan his snow.
 All tribes beside of Indian name,
 That glossy shine, or vivid flame,

Where rises, and where sets the day,
 Whate'er they boast of rich and gay,
 Contribute to the gorgeous plan,
 Proud to advance it all they can.
 This plumage neither dashing show'r,
 Nor blasts, that shake the dripping bow'r,
 Shall drench again or discompose,
 But, screen'd from ev'ry storm that blows,
 It boasts a splendour ever new,
 Safe with protecting Montagu.

To the same patroness resort,
 Secure of favour at her court,
 Strong Genius, from whose forge of thought
 Forms rise, to quick perfection wrought,
 Which, though new born, with vigour move,
 Like Pallas springing arm'd from Jove—
 Imagination scatt'ring round
 Wild roses over furrow'd ground,
 Which Labour of his frown beguile,
 And teach Philosophy a smile—
 Wit flashing on Religion's side,
 Whose fires, to sacred Truth applied,
 The gem, though luminous before,
 Obtrudes on human notice more,
 Like sunbeams on the golden height
 Of some tall temple playing bright—
 Well-tutor'd Learning, from his books
 Dismiss'd with grave, not haughty, looks,
 Their order on his shelves exact,
 Not more harmonious or compact
 Than that, to which he keeps confin'd
 The various treasures of his mind—
 All these to Montagu's repair,
 Ambitious of a shelter there,
 There Genius, Learning, Fancy, Wit,
 Their ruffled plumage calm refit,
 (For stormy troubles loudest roar
 Around their flight who highest soar)
 And in her eye, and by her aid,
 Shine safe without a fear to fade.

She thus maintains divided sway
 With yon bright regent of the day ;
 The plume and poet both, we know,
 Their lustre to his influence owe ;
 And she the works of Phœbus aiding,
 Both poet saves and plume from fading.

VERSES

*Supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk, during his solitary
 abode in the island of Juan Fernandez.*

I AM monarch of all I survey,
 My right there is none to dispute ;
 From the centre all round to the sea,
 I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
 O Solitude ! where are the charms
 That sages have seen in thy face ?
 Better dwell in the midst of alarms,
 Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,
 I must finish my journey alone,
 Never hear the sweet music of speech,
 I start at the sound of my own.
 The beasts, that roam over the plain,
 My form with indifference see ;
 They are so unacquainted with man,
 Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship, and love,
 Divinely bestow'd upon man,
 O, had I the wings of a dove,
 How soon would I taste you again !
 My sorrows I then might assuage
 In the ways of religion and truth,
 Might learn from the wisdom of age,
 And be cheer'd by the sallies of youth.

Religion ! what treasure untold
 Resides in that heavenly word !
 More precious than silver and gold,
 Or all that this earth can afford.
 But the sound of the church-going bell
 These valleys and rocks never heard,
 Never sigh'd at the sound of a knell,
 Or smil'd when a sabbath appear'd.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport,
 Convey to this desolate shore
 Some cordial endearing report
 Of a land I shall visit no more.
 My friends, do they now and then send
 A wish or a thought after me ?
 O tell me I yet have a friend,
 Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind !
 Compar'd with the speed of its flight,
 The tempest itself lags behind,
 And the swift-winged arrows of light.
 When I think of my own native land,
 In a moment I seem to be there ;
 But alas ! recollection at hand
 Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the seafowl is gone to her nest,
 The beast is laid down in his lair ;
 Even here is a season of rest,
 And I to my cabin repair.
 There's mercy in every place,
 And mercy, encouraging thought !
 Gives even affliction a grace,
 And reconciles man to his lot.

ON THE PROMOTION OF
EDWARD THURLOW, Esq.

TO THE
LORD HIGH CHANCELLORSHIP OF ENGLAND

ROUND Thurlow's head in early youth,
And in his sportive days,
Fair Science pour'd the light of truth,
And Genius shed his rays.

See ! with united wonder cried
Th' experienc'd and the sage,
Ambition in a boy supplied
With all the skill of age !

Discernment, eloquence, and grace
Proclaim him born to sway
The balance in the highest place,
And bear the palm away.

The praise bestow'd was just and wise ;
He sprang impetuous forth
Secure of conquest, where the prize
Attends superior worth.

So the best courser on the plain
Ere yet he starts is known,
And does but at the goal obtain
What all had deem'd his own.

ODE TO PEACE.

COME, Peace of mind, delightful guest !
Return, and make thy downy nest
Once more in this sad heart :
Nor riches I nor pow'r pursue,
Nor hold forbidden joys in view ;
We therefore need not part.

Where wilt thou dwell, if not with me,
From av'rice and ambition free,

And pleasure's fatal wiles ?

For whom, alas ! dost thou prepare
The sweets, that I was wont to share,
The banquet of thy smiles ?

The great, the gay, shall they partake
The heav'n that thou alone canst make ?

And wilt thou quit the stream,
That murmurs through the dewy mead,
The grove and the sequester'd shed,
To be a guest with them ?

For thee I panted, thee I priz'd,

For thee I gladly sacrific'd

Whate'er I lov'd before ;

And shall I see thee start away,
And helpless, hopeless, hear thee say—
Farewell ! we meet no more !



HUMAN FRAILTY.

WEAK and irresolute is man ;

The purpose of to-day,

Woven with pains into his plan,

To-morrow rends away.

The bow well bent, and smart the spring,

Vice seems already slain ;

But Passion rudely snaps the string,

And it revives again.

Some foe to his upright intent

Finds out his weaker part ;

Virtue engages his assent,

But Pleasure wins his heart.

'Tis here the folly of the wise

Through all his art we view ;

And, while his tongue the charge denies,
His conscience owns it true.

Bound on a voyage of awful length
And dangers little known,
A stranger to superior strength,
Man vainly trusts his own.

But oars alone can ne'er prevail,
To reach the distant coast !
The breath of Heav'n must swell the sail,
Or all the toil is lost.

THE MODERN PATRIOT.

REBELLION is my theme all day ;
I only wish 'twould come
(As who knows but perhaps it may ?)
A little nearer home.

Yon roaring boys, who rave and fight
On t'other side th' Atlantic,
I always held them in the right,
But most so when most frantic.

When lawless mobs insult the court,
That man shall be my toast,
If breaking windows be the sport,
Who bravely breaks the most.

But O ! for him my fancy culls
The choicest flow'rs she bears,
Who constitutionally pulls
Your house about your ears.

Such civil broils are my delight,
Though some folks can't endure them,
Who say the mob are mad outright,
And that a rope must cure them.

A rope ! I wish we patriots had
Such strings for all who need 'em—
What ! hang a man for going mad !
Then farewell British freedom.

ON OBSERVING SOME
NAMES OF LITTLE NOTE

RECORDED IN THE BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA.

OH, fond attempt to give a deathless lot
To names ignoble, born to be forgot !
In vain, recorded in historic page,
They court the notice of a future age :
Those twinkling tiny lustres of the land
Drop one, by one from Fame's neglecting hand ;
Lethæan gulfs receive them as they fall,
And dark oblivion soon absorbs them all.

So when a child, as playful children use,
Has burnt to tinder a stale last year's news,
The flame extinct, he views the roving fire—
There goes my lady, and there goes the squire
There goes the parson, oh illustrious spark !
And there, scarce less illustrious, goes the clerk !

REPORT

OF AN ADJUDGED CASE, NOT TO BE FOUND IN
ANY OF THE BOOKS.

BETWEEN Nose and Eyes a strange contest arose,
The spectacles set them unhappily wrong ;
The point in dispute was, as all the world knows,
To which the said spectacles ought to belong.

So Tongue was the lawyer, and argued the cause
With a great deal of skill, and a wig full of learning ;
While chief baron Ear sat to balance the laws,
So fam'd for his talent in nicely discerning.

In behalf of the Nose it will quickly appear,
And your lordship, he said, will undoubtedly find,

2 N

That the Nose has had spectacles always in wear,
Which amounts to possession time out of mind.

Then holding the spectacles up to the court—
Your lordship observes they are made with a
straddle,
As wide as the ridge of the nose is ; in short,
Design'd to sit close to it, just like a saddle.

Again, would your lordship a moment suppose
('Tis a case that has happen'd, and may be again)
That the visage or countenance had not a nose,
Pray who would, or who could, wear spectacles then ?

On the whole it appears, and my argument shows,
With a reasoning the court will never condemn,
That the spectacles plainly were made for the Nose,
And the Nose was as plainly intended for them.

Then shifting his side (as a lawyer knows how),
He pleaded again in behalf of the Eyes :
But what were his arguments few people know,
For the court did not think they were equally wise.

So his lordship decreed, with a grave solemn tone,
Decisive and clear, without one *if* or *but*—
That, whenever the Nose put his spectacles on,
By daylight or candlelight—Eyes should be shut !

ON THE BURNING OF LORD MANSFIELD'S LIBRARY,

TOGETHER WITH HIS MSS.,

By the Mob, in the Month of June, 1780.

So then—the Vandals of our isle,
Sworn foes to sense and law,
Have burnt to dust a nobler pile
Than ever Roman saw !

And MURRAY sighs o'er Pope and Swift,
And many a treasure more,

The well-judge'd purchase, and the gift,
That grac'd his letter'd store.

Their pages mangled, burnt and torn,
The loss was *his alone* ;
But ages yet to come shall mourn
The burning of *his own*.

ON THE SAME.

WHEN wit and genius meet their doom
In all devouring flame,
They tell us of the fate of Rome,
And bid us fear the same.

O'er MURRAY's loss the Muses wept,
They felt the rude alarm,
Yet bless'd the guardian care that kept
His sacred head from harm.

There Mem'ry, like the bee, that's fed
From Flora's balmy store,
The quintessence of all he read
Had treasur'd up before.

The lawless herd, with fury blind,
Have done him cruel wrong ;
The flow'rs are gone—but still we find
The honey on his tongue.

THE LOVE OF THE WORLD REPROVED ; OR, HYPOCRISY DETECTED*.

THUS says the prophet of the Turk,
Good Mussulman, abstain from pork ;

* It may be proper to inform the reader, that this piece has already appeared in print, having found its way, though with some unnecessary additions by an unknown hand, into the Leeds Journal, without the author's privity.

There is a part in ev'ry swine
 No friend or follower of mine
 May taste, whate'er his inclination,
 On pain of excommunication.
 Such Mahomet's mysterious charge,
 And thus he left the point at large,
 Had he the sinful part express'd,
 They might with safety eat the rest ;
 But for one piece they thought it hard
 From the whole hog to be debarr'd ;
 And set their wit at work to find
 What joint the prophet had in mind.
 Much controversy straight arose,
 These choose the back, the belly those ;
 By some 'tis confidently said
 He meant not to forbid the head ;
 While others at that doctrine rail,
 And piously prefer the tail.
 Thus, conscience freed from ev'ry clog,
 Mahometans eat up the hog.

You laugh—'tis well—The tale applied
 May make you laugh on t'other side.
 Renounce the world—the preacher cries.
 We do—a multitude replies.
 While one as innocent regards
 A snug and friendly game at cards ;
 And one, whatever you may say,
 Can see no evil in a play ;
 Some love a concert, or a race ;
 And others shooting, and the chase.
 Revil'd and lov'd, renounc'd and follow'd,
 Thus, bit by bit, the world is swallow'd ;
 Each thinks his neighbour makes too free,
 Yet likes a slice as well as he ;
 With sophistry their sauce they sweeten,
 Till quite from tail to snout 'tis eaten,

ON THE DEATH OF
MRS (NOW LADY) THROCKMORTON'S
BULFINCH.

YE nymphs ! if e'er your eyes were red
With tears o'er hapless fav'rites shed,
 O share Maria's grief !
Her fav'rite, even in his cage,
(What will not hunger's cruel rage ?)
 Assassin'd by a thief.

Where Rhenus strays his vines among,
The egg was laid from which he sprung ;
 And, though by nature mute,
Or only with a whistle blest,
Well-taught he all the sounds express'd
 Of flagelet or flute.

The honours of his ebon poll
Were brighter than the sleekest mole ;
 His bosom of the hue
With which Aurora decks the skies,
When piping winds shall soon arise,
 To sweep away the dew.

Above, below, in all the house,
Dire foe alike of bird and mouse,
 No cat had leave to dwell ;
And Bully's cage supported stood
On props of smoothest-shaven wood,
 Large-built, and lattic'd well.

Well-lattic'd—but the grate, alas !
Not rough with wire of steel or brass,
 For Bully's plumage sake,
But smooth with wands from Ouse's side,
With which, when neatly peel'd and dried,
 The swains their baskets make.

2 N 2

Night veil'd the pole, all seem'd secure :
 When led by instinct sharp and sure,
 Subsistence to provide,
 A beast forth sallied on the scout,
 Long-back'd, long-tail'd, with whisker'd snout,
 And badger-colour'd hide.

He, ent'ring at the study door,
 Its ample area 'gan explore ;
 And something in the wind
 Conjectur'd, sniffing round and round,
 Better than all the books he found,
 Food chiefly for the mind.

Just then, by adverse fate impress'd,
 A dream disturb'd poor Bully's rest ;
 In sleep he seem'd to view
 A rat fast clinging to the cage,
 And, screaming at the sad presage,
 Awoke and found it true.

For, aided both by ear and scent,
 Right to his mark the monster went—
 Ah, muse ! forbear to speak
 Minute the horrors that ensued ;
 His teeth were strong, the cage was wood—
 He left poor Bully's beak.

O had he made that too his prey ;
 That beak, whence issued many a lay
 Of such mellifluous tone,
 Might have repaid him well, I wot,
 For silencing so sweet a throat,
 Fast stuck within his own.

Maria weeps—the Muses mourn—
 So when, by Bacchanalians torn,
 On Thracian Hebrus' side
 The tree-enchanted Orpheus fell,
 His head alone remain'd to tell
 The cruel death he died.

THE ROSE.

THE rose had been wash'd, just wash'd in a show'r,
Which Mary to Anna convey'd,
The plentiful moisture encumber'd the flow'r,
And weigh'd down its beautiful head.

The cup was all fill'd, and the leaves were all wet,
And it seem'd to a fanciful view,
To weep for the buds it had left with regret,
On the flourishing bush where it grew.

I hastily seiz'd it, unfit as it was
For a nosegay, so dripping and drown'd,
And swinging it rudely, too rudely, alas !
I snapp'd it, it fell to the ground.

And such, I exclaim'd, is the pitiless part
Some act by the delicate mind,
Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart
Already to sorrow resign'd.

This elegant rose, had I shaken it less,
Might have bloom'd with its owner a while ;
And the tear, that is wip'd with a little address,
May be follow'd perhaps by a smile.

THE DOVES.

REAS'NING at ev'ry step he treads,
Man yet mistakes his way,
While meaner things, whom instinct leads,
Are rarely known to stray.

One silent eve I wander'd late,
And heard the voice of love ;
The turtle thus address'd her mate,
And sooth'd the list'ning dove :

Our mutual bond of faith and truth
 No time shall disengage,
 Those blessings of our early youth
 Shall cheer our latest age :

While innocence without disguise,
 And constancy sincere,
 Shall fill the circles of those eyes,
 And mine can read them there ;

Those ills that wait on all below,
 Shall ne'er be felt by me,
 Or gently felt, and only so,
 As being shar'd with thee.

When lightnings flash among the trees,
 Or kites are hov'ring near,
 I fear lest thee alone they seize,
 And know no other fear.

'Tis then I feel myself a wife,
 And press thy wedded side,
 Resolv'd a union form'd for life
 Death never shall divide.

But oh ! if fickle and unchaste,
 (Forgive a transient thought)
 Thou couldst become unkind at last,
 And scorn thy present lot,

No need of lightnings from on high,
 Or kites with cruel beak ;
 Denied th' endearments of thine eye,
 This widow'd heart would break.

Thus sang the sweet sequester'd bird,
 Soft as the passing wind ;
 And I recorded what I heard,
 A lesson for mankind.

A FABLE.

A RAVEN, while with glossy breast
 Her new-laid eggs she fondly press'd,
 And, on her wickerwork high mounted,
 Her chickens prematurely counted,
 (A fault philosophers might blame
 If quite exempted from the same),
 Enjoy'd at ease the genial day ;
 'Twas April, as the bumpkins say,
 The legislature call'd it May.
 But suddenly a wind as high,
 As ever swept a winter sky,
 Shook the young leaves about her ears,
 And fill'd her with a thousand fears,
 Lest the rude blast should snap the bough,
 And spread her golden hopes below.
 But just at eve the blowing weather
 And all her fears were hush'd together :
 And now, quoth poor unthinking Ralph,
 'Tis over, and the brood is safe ;
 (For ravens, though as birds of omen
 They teach both conj'ers and old women,
 To tell us what is to befall,
 Can't prophesy themselves at all.)
 The morning came, when neighbour Hodge,
 Who long had mark'd her airy lodge
 And destin'd all the treasure there
 A gift to his expecting fair,
 Climb'd like a squirrel to his dray,
 And bore the worthless prize away.

MORAL.

'Tis Providence alone secures
 In ev'ry change both mine and yours :
 Safety consists not in escape
 From dangers of a frightful shape ;
 An earthquake may be bid to spare
 The man, that's strangled by a hair.

Fate steals along with silent tread,
 Found oft'nest in what least we dread ;
 Frowns in the storm with angry brow,
 But in the sunshine strikes the blow.

A COMPARISON.

THE lapse of time and rivers is the same,
 Both speed their journey with a restless stream ;
 The silent pace, with which they steal away,
 No wealth can bribe, no pray'rs persuade to stay ;
 Alike irrevocable both when past,
 And a wide ocean swallows both at last.
 Though each resemble each in ev'ry part,
 A diff'rence strikes at length the musing heart :
 Streams never flow in vain ; where streams abound,
 How laughs the land with various plenty crown'd !
 But time, that should enrich the nobler mind,
 Neglected leaves a dreary waste behind.

ANOTHER.

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

SWEET stream, that winds through yonder glade,
 Apt emblem of a virtuous maid—
 Silent and chaste she steals along,
 Far from the world's gay busy throng ;
 With gentle yet prevailing force,
 Intent upon her destin'd course ;
 Graceful and useful all she does,
 Blessing and blest where'er she goes,
 Pure-bosom'd as that wat'ry glass,
 And heav'n reflected in her face.

THE POET'S NEW-YEAR'S GIFT.

TO MRS (NOW LADY) THROCKMORTON.

MARIA ! I have ev'ry good
 For thee wish'd many a time,
 Both sad, and in a cheerful mood,
 But never yet in rhyme.

To wish thee fairer is no need,
 More prudent, or more sprightly,
 Or more ingenious, or more freed
 From temper-flaws unsightly.

What favour then not yet possess'd,
 Can I for thee require,
 In wedded love already blest,
 To thy whole heart's desire ?

None here is happy but in part :
 Full bliss is bliss divine ;
 There dwells some wish in ev'ry heart,
 And doubtless one in thine.

That wish, on some fair future day,
 Which Fate shall brightly gild,
 ('Tis blameless, be it what it may)
 I wish it all fulfill'd.

 ODE TO APOLLO.

ON AN INKGLASS ALMOST DRIED IN THE SUN.

PATRON of all those luckless brains,
 That, to the wrong side leaning,
 Indite much metre with much pains,
 And little or no meaning :

Ah why, since oceans, rivers, streams,
 That water all the nations,

Pay tribute to thy glorious beams,
In constant exhalations,

Why, stooping from the noon of day,
Too covetous of drink,
Apollo, hast thou stol'n away
A poet's drop of ink ?

Upborne into the viewless air
It floats a vapour now,
Impell'd through regions dense and rare,
By all the winds that blow.

Ordain'd perhaps ere summer flies,
Combin'd with millions more,
To form an Iris in the skies,
Though black and foul before.

Illustrious drop ! and happy then
Beyond the happiest lot,
Of all that ever pass'd my pen,
So soon to be forgot !

Phœbus, if such be thy design,
To place it in thy bow,
Give wit, that what is left may shine
With equal grace below.

PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED.

A FABLE.

I SHALL not ask Jean Jacques Rousseau*
If birds confabulate or no ;
'Tis clear, that they were always able
To hold discourse, at least in fable ;

* It was one of the whimsical speculations of this philosopher, that all fables which ascribe reason and speech to animals should be withheld from children, as being only vehicles of deception. But what child was ever deceived by them, or can be, against the evidence of his senses ?

And e'en the child, who knows no better
 Than to interpret by the letter,
 A story of a cock and bull,
 Must have a most uncommon skull.

It chanc'd then on a winter's day,
 But warm, and bright, and calm as May,
 The birds, conceiving a design
 To forestal sweet St Valentine,
 In many an orchard, copse, and grove,
 Assembled on affairs of love,
 And with much twitter and much chatter,
 Began to agitate the matter.
 At length a Bulfinch, who could boast
 More years and wisdom than the most,,
 Entreated, op'ning wide his beak,
 A moment's liberty to speak ;
 And, silence publicly enjoin'd,
 Deliver'd briefly thus his mind :

My friends ! be cautious how ye treat
 The subject upon which we meet ;
 I fear we shall have winter yet.

A Finch, whose tongue knew no control,
 With golden wing, and satin poll,
 A last year's bird, who ne'er had tried
 What marriage means, thus pert replied :

Methinks the gentleman, quoth she,
 Opposite in the apple-tree,
 By his good will would keep us single
 Till yonder heav'n and earth shall mingle,
 Or (which is likelier to befall)
 Till death exterminate us all.

I marry without more ado,
 My dear Dick Redcap, what say you ?

Dick heard, and tweedling, ogling, bridling,
 Turning short round, strutting and sideling,
 Attested, glad, his approbation
 Of an immediate conjugation.
 Their sentiments so well express'd
 Influenc'd mightily the rest,
 All pair'd, and each pair built a nest.

But though the birds were thus in haste,
 The leaves came on not quite so fast,
 And Destiny, that sometimes bears
 An aspect stern on man's affairs,
 Not altogether smil'd on theirs.
 The wind, of late breath'd gently forth,
 Now shifted east, and east by north ;
 Bare trees and shrubs but ill, you know,
 Could shelter them from rain or snow,
 Stepping into their nests, they paddled,
 Themselves were chill'd, their eggs were addled ;
 Soon ev'ry father bird and mother
 Grew quarrelsome, and peck'd each other,
 Parted without the least regret,
 Except that they had ever met,
 And learn'd in future to be wiser,
 Than to neglect a good adviser.

MORAL.

Misses ! the tale that I relate
 This lesson seems to carry—
 Choose not alone a proper mate,
 But proper time to marry.

 THE DOG AND THE WATER-LILY.

NO FABLE.

THE noon was shady, and soft airs
 Swept Ouse's silent tide,
 When, 'scap'd from literary cares,
 I wander'd on his side.

My spaniel, prettiest of his race,
 And high in pedigree,
 (Two nymphs* adorn'd with ev'ry grace
 That spaniel found for me)

* Sir Robert Gunning's daughters.

Now wanton'd lost in flags and reeds,
 Now starting into sight,
 Pursued the swallow o'er the meads
 With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse display'd
 His lilies newly blown ;
 Their beauties I intent survey'd,
 And one I wish'd my own.

With cane extended far I sought
 To steer it close to land ;
 But still the prize, though nearly caught,
 Escap'd my eager hand.

Beau mark'd my unsuccessful pains
 With fixed consid'rate face,
 And puzzling set his puppy brains
 To comprehend the case.

But with a cherup clear and strong,
 Dispersing all his dream,
 I thence withdrew, and follow'd long
 The windings of the stream.

My ramble ended, I return'd ;
Beau, trotting far before,
 The floating wreath again discern'd,
 And plunging left the shore.

I saw him with that lily cropp'd
 Impatient swim to meet
 My quick approach, and soon he dropp'd
 The treasure at my feet.

Charm'd with the sight, the world, I cried,
 Shall hear of this thy deed :
 My dog shall mortify the pride
 Of man's superior breed :

But chief myself I will enjoin,
 Awake at duty's call,
 To show a love as prompt as thine
 To Him who gives me all.

THE POET, THE OYSTER, AND THE SENSITIVE PLANT.

AN oyster, cast upon the shore,
Was heard, though never heard before,
Complaining in a speech well worded—
And worthy thus to be recorded :—

Ah, hapless wretch ! condemn'd to dwell
For ever in my native shell ;
Ordain'd to move when others please,
Not for my own content or ease ;
But toss'd and buffeted about,
Now *in* the water and now *out*.
'Twere better to be born a stone,
Of ruder shape, and feeling none,
Than with a tenderness like mine,
And sensibilities so fine !
I envy that unfeeling shrub,
Fast-rooted against ev'ry rub.
The plant he meant grew not far off,
And felt the sneer with scorn enough ;
Was hurt, disgusted, mortified,
And with asperity replied.

When, cry the botanists, and stare,
Did plants call'd sensitive grow there ?
No matter when—a poet's muse is,
To make them grow just where she chooses.

You shapeless nothing in a dish,
You that are but almost a fish,
I scorn your coarse insinuation,
And have most plentiful occasion,
To wish myself the rock I view,
Or such another dolt as you :
For many a grave and learned clerk,
And many a gay unletter'd spark,
With curious touch examines me,
If I can feel as well as he ;
And when I bend, retire, and shrink,
Says—Well, 'tis more than one would think !

Thus life is spent (oh fie upon't !)
In being touch'd, and crying—Don't !

A poet, in his ev'ning walk,
O'erheard and check'd this idle talk.
And your fine sense, he said, and yours,
Whatever evil it endures,
Deserves not, if so soon offended,
Much to be pitied or commended.
Disputes, though short, are far too long,
Where both alike are in the wrong ;
Your feelings in their full amount,
Are all upon your own account.

You, in your grotto-work enclos'd,
Complain of being thus expos'd ;
Yet nothing feel in that rough coat,
Save when the knife is at your throat,
Wherever driv'n by wind or tide,
Exempt from ev'ry ill beside.

And as for you, my Lady Squeamish,
Who reckon ev'ry touch a blemish,
If all the plants, that can be found
Embellishing the scene around,
Should droop and wither where they grow,
You would not feel at all—not you.
The noblest minds their virtue prove
By pity, sympathy, and love :
These, these are feelings truly fine,
And prove their owner half divine.

His censure reach'd them as he dealt it,
And each by shrinking show'd he felt it.

THE SHRUBBERY.

WRITTEN IN A TIME OF AFFLICTION

OH, happy shades—to me unblest !
Friendly to peace, but not to me !
How ill the scene that offers rest,
And heart that cannot rest, agree !

2 o 2

This glassy stream, that spreading pine,
 Those alders quiv'ring to the breeze,
 Might sooth a soul less hurt than mine,
 And please, if any thing could please.

But fix'd unalterable Care
 Foregoes not what she feels within,
 Shows the same sadness ev'ry where,
 And slights the season and the scene.

For all that pleas'd in wood or lawn,
 While Peace possess'd these silent bow'rs,
 Her animating smile withdrawn,
 Has lost its beauties and its pow'rs.

The saint or moralist should tread
 This moss-grown alley musing, slow ;
 They seek like me the secret shade,
 But not like me to nourish wo !

Me fruitful scenes and prospects waste
 Alike admonish not to roam ;
 These tell me of enjoyments past,
 And those of sorrows yet to come.

THE WINTER NOSEGAY.

WHAT Nature, alas ! has denied
 To the delicate growth of our isle,
 Art has in a measure supplied,
 And Winter is deck'd with a smile.
 See, Mary, what beauties I bring
 From the shelter of that sunny shed,
 Where the flow'rs have the charms of the spring,
 Though abroad they are frozen and dead.

'Tis a bow'r of Arcadian sweets,
 Where Flora is still in her prime,
 A fortress to which she retreats
 From the cruel assaults of the climate.

While Earth wears a mantle of snow,
 These pinks are as fresh and as gay
 As the fairest and sweetest that blow
 On the beautiful bosom of May.

See how they have safely surviv'd
 The frowns of a sky so severe ;
 Such Mary's true love, that has liv'd
 Through many a turbulent year.
 The charms of the late blowing rose
 Seem grac'd with a livelier hue,
 And the winter of sorrow best shows
 The truth of a friend such as you.

MUTUAL FORBEARANCE

NECESSARY TO THE HAPPINESS OF THE
 MARRIED STATE.

THE lady thus address'd her spouse :—
 What a mere dungeon is this house !
 By no means large enough ; and was it,
 Yet this dull room, and that dark closet,
 Those hangings with their worn-out graces,
 Long beards, long noses, and pale faces,
 Are such an antiquated scene,
 They overwhelm me with the spleen.
 Sir Humphrey, shooting in the dark,
 Makes answer quite beside the mark :
 No doubt, my dear, I bade him come,
 Engag'd myself to be at home,
 And shall expect him at the door,
 Precisely when the clock strikes four.

You are so deaf, the lady cried
 (And rais'd her voice, and frown'd beside).
 You are so sadly deaf, my dear,
 What shall I do to make you hear ?

Dismiss poor Harry ! he replies ;
 Some people are more nice than wise :
 For one slight trespass all this stir ?
 What if he did ride whip and spur,

'Twas but a mile—your fav'rite horse
Will never look one hair the worse.

Well, I protest 'tis past all bearing—
Child ! I am rather hard of hearing—
Yes, truly ; one must scream and bawl :
I tell you, you can't hear at all !
Then, with a voice exceeding low,
No matter if you hear or no.

Alas ! and is domestic strife,
That sorest ill of human life,
A plague so little to be fear'd,
As to be wantonly incurr'd,
To gratify a fretful passion,
On ev'ry trivial provocation ?
The kindest and the happiest pair
Will find occasion to forbear ;
And something, ev'ry day they live,
To pity, and perhaps forgive.
But if infirmities, that fall
In common to the lot of all,
A blemish or a sense impair'd,
Are crimes so little to be spar'd,
Then farewell all that must create
The comfort of the wedded state ;
Instead of harmony, 'tis jar,
And tumult, and intestine war.

The love that cheers life's latest stage,
Proof against sickness and old age,
Preserv'd by virtue from declension,
Becomes not weary of attention ;
But lives, when that exterior grace,
Which first inspir'd the flame, decays.
'Tis gentle, delicate, and kind,
To faults compassionate or blind,
And will with sympathy endure
Those evils it would gladly cure :
But angry, coarse, and harsh expression
Shows love to be a mere profession ;
Proves that the heart is none of his,
Or soon expels him if it is.

THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT.

FORC'D from home and all its pleasures,
 Afric's coast I left forlorn ;
 To increase the stranger's treasures,
 O'er the raging billows borne.
 Men from England bought and sold me,
 Paid my price in paltry gold ;
 But, though slave they have enroll'd me,
 Minds are never to be sold.

Still in thought as free as ever,
 What are England's rights, I ask,
 Me from my delights to sever,
 Me to torture, me to task ?
 Fleecy locks and black complexion
 Cannot forfeit Nature's claim ;
 Skins may differ, but affection
 Dwells in white and black the same.

Why did all-creating Nature
 Make the plant, for which we toil ?
 Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
 Sweat of ours must dress the soil.
 Think, ye masters iron-hearted,
 Lolling at your jovial boards ;
 Think how many backs have smarted
 For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,
 Is there one, who reigns on high ?
 Has he bid you buy and sell us,
 Speaking from his throne the sky ?
 Ask him, if your knotted scourges,
 Matches, blood-extorting screws,
 Are the means that duty urges,
 Agents of his will to use ?

Hark ! he answers—wild tornadoes,
 Strewing yonder sea with wrecks ;

Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
 Are the voice, with which he speaks.
 He, foreseeing what vexations
 Afric's sons should undergo,
 Fix'd their tyrants' habitations
 Where his whirlwinds answer—no.

By our blood in Afric wasted,
 Ere our necks receiv'd the chain ;
 By the mis'ries that we tasted,
 Crossing in your barks the main ;
 By our suff'rings, since ye brought us
 To the man-degrading mart ;
 All, sustain'd by patience, taught us
 Only by a broken heart :

Deem our nation brutes no longer,
 Till some reason ye shall find
 Worthier of regard, and stronger
 Than the colour of our kind.
 Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings
 Tarnish all your boasted pow'rs,
 Prove that you have human feelings,
 Ere you proudly question ours ?

PITY FOR POOR AFRICANS.

** Video meliora proboque,
 Deteriora sequor.*—*

I own I am shock'd at the purchase of slaves,
 And fear those who buy them and sell them, are
 knaves ;
 What I hear of their hardships, their tortures, and
 groans,
 Is almost enough to draw pity from stones.
 I pity them greatly, but I must be mum.
 For how could we do without sugar and rum ?

Especially sugar, so needful we see ?
 What, give up our desserts, our coffee, and tea !

Besides, if we do, the French, Dutch, and Danes,
 Will heartily thank us, no doubt, for our pains ;
 If we do not buy the poor creatures, they will,
 And tortures and groans will be multiplied still.

If foreigners likewise would give up the trade,
 Much more in behalf of your wish might be said ;
 But, while they get riches by purchasing blacks,
 Pray tell me why we may not also go snacks ?

Your scruples and arguments bring to my mind
 A story so pat, you may think it is coin'd,
 On purpose to answer you, out of my mint ;
 But I can assure you I saw it in print.

A youngster at school, more sedate than the rest,
 Had once his integrity put to the test ;
 His comrades had plotted an orchard to rob,
 And ask'd him to go and assist in the job.

He was shock'd, sir, like you, and answer'd—' Oh
 no !

What ! rob our good neighbour ! I pray you don't go ;
 Besides, the man's poor, his orchard's his bread,
 Then think of his children, for they must be fed.'

' You speak very fine, and you look very grave,
 But apples we want, and apples we'll have ;
 If you will go with us, you shall have a share,
 If not, you shall have neither apple nor pear.'

They spoke, and Tom ponder'd—' I see they will go :
 Poor man ! what a pity to injure him so !
 Poor man ! I would save him his fruit if I could,
 But staying behind will do him no good.

' If the matter depended alone upon me,
 His apples might hang, till they dropp'd from the
 tree ;

But, since they will take them, I think I'll go too,
 He will lose none by me, though I get a few.'

His scruples thus silenc'd, Tom felt more at ease,
 And went with his comrades the apples to seize :
 He blam'd and protested, but join'd in the plan :
 He shar'd in the plunder, but pitied the man.

THE MORNING DREAM.

'Twas in the glad season of spring,
 Asleep at the dawn of the day,
 I dream'd what I cannot but sing,
 So pleasant it seem'd as I lay.
 I dream'd, that, on ocean afloat,
 Far hence to the westward I sail'd,
 While the billows high-lifted the boat,
 And the fresh-blowing breeze never fail'd,

In the steerage a woman I saw,
 Such at least was the form that she wore,
 Whose beauty impress'd me with awe,
 Ne'er taught me by woman before.
 She sat, and a shield at her side
 Shed light, like a sun on the waves,
 And, smiling divinely, she cried—
 ' I go to make freemen of slaves.'—

Then raising her voice to a strain
 The sweetest that ear ever heard,
 She sung of the slave's broken chain,
 Wherever her glory appear'd.
 Some clouds, which had over us hung,
 Fled, chas'd by her melody clear,
 And methought while she liberty sung,
 'Twas liberty only to hear.

Thus swiftly dividing the flood,
 To a slave-cultur'd island we came,
 Where, a demon, her enemy, stood—
 Oppression his terrible name.
 In his hand, as the sign of his sway,
 A scourge hung with lashes he bore,

And stood looking out for his prey
From Africa's sorrowful shore.

But soon as approaching the land
That goddess-like woman he view'd,
The scourge he let fall from his hand,
With blood of his subjects imbru'd.
I saw him both sicken and die,
And the moment the monster expir'd,
Heard shouts that ascended the sky,
From thousands with rapture inspir'd.

Awaking, how could I but muse
At what such a dream should betide?
But soon my ear caught the glad news,
Which serv'd my weak thought for a guide—
That Britannia, renown'd o'er the waves
For the hatred she ever had shown
To the black-sceptred rulers of slaves,
Resolves to have none of her own.

THE

NIGHTINGALE AND GLOW-WORM.

A NIGHTINGALE, that all day long
Had cheer'd the village with his song,
Nor yet at eve his note suspended,
Nor yet when eventide was ended,
Began to feel, as well he might,
The keen demands of appetite;
When, looking eagerly around,
He spied far off, upon the ground,
A something shining in the dark,
And knew the glow-worm by his spark;
So, stooping down from hawthorn top,
He thought to put him in his crop.
The worm, aware of his intent,
Harangu'd him thus, right eloquent—

Did you admire my lamp, quoth he,
As much as I your minstrelsy,

You would abhor to do me wrong,
 As much as I to spoil your song ;
 For 'twas the selfsame pow'r divine
 Taught you to sing and me to shine ;
 That you with music, I with light,
 Might beautify and cheer the night.
 The songster heard his short oration,
 And, warbling out his approbation,
 Releas'd him, as my story tells,
 And found a supper somewhere else.

Hence jarring sectaries may learn
 Their real int'rest to discern ;
 That brother should not war with brother,
 And worry and devour each other :
 But sing and shine by sweet consent,
 Till life's poor transient night is spent,
 Respecting in each other's case
 The gifts of nature and of grace.

Those Christians best deserve the name,
 Who studiously make peace their aim ;
 Peace both the duty and the prize
 Of him that creeps and him that flies.

ON A GOLDFINCH,

STARVED TO DEATH IN HIS CAGE.

TIME was when I was free as air,
 The thistle's downy seed my fare,
 My drink the morning dew ;
 I perch'd at will on ev'ry spray,
 My form genteel, my plumage gay,
 My strains for ever new.

But gaudy plumage, sprightly strain,
 And form genteel, were all in vain,
 And of a transient date ;
 For caught, and cag'd, and starv'd to death,
 In dying sighs my little breath
 Soon pass'd the wiry grate.

Thanks, gentle swain, for all my woes,
 And thanks for this effectual close
 And cure of ev'ry ill ;
 More cruelty could none express ;
 And I, if you had shown me less,
 Had been your pris'ner still.

THE

PINEAPPLE AND THE BEE.

THE pineapples, in triple row,
 Were basking hot, and all in blow ;
 A Bee of most discerning taste,
 Perceiv'd the fragrance as he pass'd.
 On eager wing the spoiler came,
 And search'd for crannies in the frame,
 Urg'd his attempt on ev'ry side,
 To ev'ry pane his trunk applied ;
 But still in vain, the frame was tight,
 And only pervious to the light :
 Thus having wasted half the day,
 He trimm'd his flight another way.

Methinks, I said, in thee I find
 The sin and madness of mankind.
 To joys forbidden man aspires,
 Consumes his soul with vain desires ;
 Folly the spring of his pursuit,
 And disappointment all the fruit.
 While Cynthia ogles, as she passes,
 The nymph between two chariot glasses,
 She is the pineapple, and he
 The silly unsuccessful bee.
 The maid, who views with pensive air
 The show-glass fraught with glitt'ring ware,
 Sees watches, bracelets, rings, and lockets,
 But sighs at thought of empty pockets ;
 Like thine, her appetite is keen,
 But ah, the cruel glass between !

Our dear delights are often such,
 Expos'd to view, but not to touch ;
 The sight our foolish heart inflames,
 We long for pineapples in frames ;
 With hopeless wish one looks and lingers ;
 One breaks the glass, and cuts his fingers ;
 But they whom truth and wisdom lead,
 Can gather honey from a weed.

H O R A C E,

Book II. Ode X.

RECEIVE, dear friend, the truths I teach,
 So shalt thou live beyond the reach
 Of adverse Fortune's pow'r ;
 Not always tempt the distant deep,
 Nor always timorously creep
 Along the treach'rous shore.

He, that holds fast the golden mean,
 And lives contentedly between
 The little and the great,
 Feels not the wants that pinch the poor,
 Nor plagues that haunt the rich man's door,
 Imbitt'ring all his state.

The tallest pines feel most the pow'r
 Of wint'ry blasts ; the loftiest tow'r
 Comes heaviest to the ground ;
 The bolts that spare the mountain's side,
 His cloud-capt eminence divide,
 And spread the ruin round.

The well-inform'd philosopher
 Rejoices with a wholesome fear,
 And hopes, in spite of pain ;
 If Winter bellow from the north,
 Soon the sweet Spring comes dancing forth,
 And Nature laughs again.

What if thine heav'n be overcast,
 The dark appearance will not last ;
 Expect a brighter sky.
 The God that strings the silver bow,
 Awakes sometimes the muses too,
 And lays his arrows by.

If hind'rances obstruct thy way,
 Thy magnanimity display,
 And let thy strength be seen ;
 But O ! if fortune fill thy sail
 With more than a propitious gale,
 Take half thy canvass in.

A REFLECTION

ON THE FOREGOING ODE.

AND is this all ? Can Reason do no more,
 Than bid me shun the deep, and dread the shore ?
 Sweet moralist ! afloat on life's rough sea,
 The Christian has an art unknown to thee.
 He holds no parley with unmanly fears ;
 Where duty bids, he confidently steers,
 Faces a thousand dangers at her call,
 And, trusting in his God, surmounts them all.

THE LILY AND THE ROSE.

THE nymph must lose her female friend,
 If more admir'd than she—
 But where will fierce contention end,
 If flow'rs can disagree ?
 Within the garden's peaceful scene
 Appear'd two lovely foes,
 Aspiring to the rank of queen,
 The Lily and the Rose.

2 P 2

The Rose soon reddened into rage,
 And, swelling with disdain,
 Appeal'd to many a poet's page
 To prove her right to reign.

The Lily's height bespoke command,
 A fair imperial flow'r ;
 She seem'd design'd for Flora's hand,
 The sceptre of her pow'r.

This civil bick'ring and debate
 The goddess chanc'd to hear,
 And flew to save, ere yet too late,
 The pride of the parterre.

Yours is, she said, the nobler hue,
 And yours the statelier mien ;
 And, till a third surpasses you,
 Let each be deem'd a queen.

Thus, sooth'd and reconcil'd, each seeks
 The fairest British fair :
 The seat of empire is her cheeks,
 They reign united there.



IDEM LATINE REDDITUM.

HEU inimicitias quoties parit æmula forma,
 Quam raro pulchræ, pulchra placere potest !
 Sed fines ultra solitos discordia tendit,
 Cum flores ipsos bilis et ira movent.

Hortus ubi dulces præbet tacitosque recessus,
 Se rapit in partes gens animosa duas ;
 Hic sibi regales Amaryllis candida cultus,
 Illic purpureo vindicat ore Rosa.

Ira Rosam et meritis quæsita superbia tangunt,
 Multaque ferventi vix cohibenda sinu,
 Dum sibi fautorum ciet undique nomina vatam,
 Jusque suum, multo carmine fulta, probat.

Altior emicat illa, et calso vertice mutat,
 Ceu flores inter non habitura parem,
 Fastiditque alios, et nata videtur in usus
 Imperii, sceptrum, Flora quod ipse gerat.

Nec Dea non sensit civilis murmura rixæ,
 Cui curæ est pictas pandere ruris opes,
 Deliciasque suas nunquam non prompta tueri,
 Dum licet et locus est, ut tueatur, adest.

Et tibi forma datur procerior omnibus, inquit ;
 Et tibi, principibus qui solet esse, color ;
 Et donec vincat quædam formosior ambas,
 Et tibi reginæ nomen, et esto tibi.

His ubi sedatus furor est, petit utraque nympham
 Qualem inter Veneres Anglia sola parit ;
 Hanc penes imperium est, nihil optant amplius, hujus
 Regnant in nitidis, et sine lite, genis.

THE POPLAR FIELD.

THE poplars are felled, farewell to the shade,
 And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade ;
 The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
 Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elaps'd, since I first took a view
 Of my favourite field, and the bank where they grew ;
 And now in the grass behold they are laid,
 And the tree is my seat, that once lent me a shade.

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,
 Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,
 And the scene, where his melody charm'd me before,
 Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hasting away,
 And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
 With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,
 Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

"Tis a sight to engage me, if any thing can,
 To muse on the perishing pleasures of man ;
 Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,
 Have a being less durable even than he.*

IDEM LATINE REDDITUM.

POPULÆ cecidit gratissima copia silvæ,
 Conticuere susurri, omnisque evanuit umbra.
 Nullæ jam levibus se miscent frondibus auræ,
 Et nulla in fluvio ramorum ludit imago.

Hei mihi ! bis senos dum luctu torqueor annos,
 His cogor silvis suetoque carere recessu,
 Cum serò rediens, stratasque in gramine cernens,
 In sedi arboribus, sub quæis errare solebam.

Ah ubi nunc merulæ cantus ? Felicior illum
 Silva tegit, duræ nondum permissa bipenni ;
 Scilicet exustos colles camposque patentes
 Odit, et indignans et non rediturus abivit.

Sed qui succisas doleo succidar et ipse,
 Et priùs huic parilis quàm creverit altera silva
 Flebor, et, exequiis parvis donatus, habebo
 Defixum lapidem tumulique cubantis acervum.

Tam subito periisse videns tam digna manere,
 Agnosco humanas sortes et tristia fata—
 Sit licèt ipse brevis, volucrique simillimus umbræ,
 Est homini brevior citiusque obitura voluptas.

* Mr Cowper afterwards altered this last stanza in the following manner :—

The change both my heart and my fancy employs,
 I reflect on the frailty of man, and his joys ;
 Short-liv'd as we are, yet our pleasures, we see,
 Have a still shorter date, and die sooner than we.

VOTUM.

O MATUTINI rores, auræque salubres,
 O nemora, et lætæ rivis felicibus herbæ,
 Graminei colles, et amœnæ in vallibus umbræ !
 Fata modò dederint quas olim in rure paterno
 Delicias, procul arte, procul formidine novi,
 Quàm vellem ignotus, quod mens mea semper avebat,
 Ante larem proprium placidam expectare senectam,
 Tum demùm, exactis non infeliciter annis,
 Sortiri tacitum lapidem, aut sub cespite condi !



CICINDELA.

BY VINCENT BOURNE.

SUB sepe exiguum est, nec rarò in margine ripæ,
 Reptile, quod lucet nocte, dieque latet.
 Vermis habet speciem, sed habet de lumine nomen ;
 At priscâ à famâ non liquet, unde micet.
 Plerique à caudâ credunt procedere lumen ;
 Nec desunt, credunt qui rutilare caput.
 Nam superas stellas quæ nox accendit, et illi
 Parcam eadem lucem dat, moduloque parem.
 Forsitan hoc prudens voluit Natura caveri,
 Ne pede quis duro reptile contereret :
 Exiguam, in tenebris ne gressum offenderet ullus,
 Prætendi voluit forsitan illa facem.
 Sive usum hunc Natura parens, seu maluit illum,
 Haud frustra accensa est lux, radiique dati.
 Ponite vos fastus, humiles nec spernite, magni ;
 Quando habet et minimum reptile, quod niteat.

I. THE GLOW-WORM.

TRANSLATION OF THE FOREGOING.

BENEATH the hedge, or near the stream,
 A worm is known to stray ;
 That shows by night a lucid beam,
 Which disappears by day.

Disputes have been, and still prevail,
 From whence his rays proceed ;
 Some give that honour to his tail,
 And others to his head.

But this is sure—the hand of might,
 That kindles up the skies,
 Gives *him* a modicum of light
 Proportion'd to his size.

Perhaps indulgent Nature meant,
 By such a lamp bestow'd,
 To bid the trav'ler, as he went,
 Be careful where he trod :

Nor crush a worm, whose useful light
 Might serve, however small,
 To show a stumbling-stone by night,
 And save him from a fall.

Whate'er she meant, this truth divine
 Is legible and plain,
 'Tis pow'r almighty bids him shine,
 Nor bids him shine in vain.

Ye proud and wealthy, let this theme
 Teach humbler thoughts to you,
 Since such a reptile has its gem,
 And boasts its splendour too.

CORNICULA.

BY VINCENT BOURNE.

NIGRAS inter aves avis est, quæ plurima turres,
 Antiquas ædes, celsaque fana colit.
 Nil tam sublime est, quod non audace volatu.
 Aëriis spernens inferiora, petit.
 Quo nemo ascendat, cui non vertigo cerebrum
 Corripiat, certè hunc seligit illa locum.
 Quo vix à terrâ tu suspicis absque tremore,
 Illa metûs expers incolumisque sedet.
 Lamina delubri supra fastigia, ventus
 Quâ cœli spiret de regione, docet ;
 Hanc ea præ reliquis mavult, secura pericli,
 Nec curat, nedum cogitat, unde cadat.
 Res inde humanas, sed summa per otia, spectat,
 Et nihil ad sese, quas videt, esse videt.
 Concursus spectat, plateâque negotia in omni,
 Omnia pro nugis at sapienter habet.
 Clamores, quas infra audit, si forsitan audit,
 Pro rebus nihili negligit, et crocitat.
 Ille tibi invideat, felix Cornicula, pennas,
 Qui sic humanis rebus abesse velit.



II. THE JACKDAW.

TRANSLATION OF THE FOREGOING.

THERE is a bird, who by his coat,
 And by the hoarseness of his note,
 Might be suppos'd a crow ;
 A great frequenter of the church,
 Where bishop-like he finds a perch,
 And dormitory too.

Above the steeple shines a plate,
 That turns and turns, to indicate
 From what point blows the weather :

Look up—your brains begin to swim,
 'Tis in the clouds—that pleases him,
 He chooses it the rather.

Fond of the speculative height,
 Thither he wings his airy flight,
 And thence securely sees
 The bustle and the rareeshow,
 That occupy mankind below,
 Secure and at his ease.

You think, no doubt, he sits and muses
 On future broken bones and bruises,
 If he should chance to fall.
 No; not a single thought like that
 Employs his philosophic pate,
 Or troubles it at all.

He sees, that this great roundabout,
 The world, with all its motley rout,
 Church, army, physic, law,
 Its customs, and its bus'nesses,
 Is no concern at all of his,
 And says—what says he?—Caw.

Thrice happy bird! I too have seen
 Much of the vanities of men;
 And, sick of having seen 'em,
 Would cheerfully these limbs resign
 For such a pair of wings as thine,
 And such a head between 'em.

AD GRILLUM.

Anacreonticum.

BY VINCENT BOURNE.

O QUI meæ culinæ
 Argutulus choraules,
 Et hospes es canorus,
 Quacunque commoreris,

Felicitatis omen ;
 Jucundiore cantu
 Si quando me salutes,
 Et ipse te rependam,
 Et ipse, quâ valebo,
 Remunerabo musâ.

Dicêris innocensque
 Et gratus inquilinus ;
 Nec victitans rapinis,
 Ut sorices voraces,
 Muresve curiosi,
 Furumque delicatum
 Vulgus domesticorum ;
 Sed tutus in camini
 Recessibus, quiete
 Contentus et calore.

Beatior Cicadâ,
 Quæ te referre formâ,
 Quæ voce te videtur ;
 Et saltitans per herbas,
 Unius, haud secundæ,
 Æstatis est chorista ;
 Tu carmen integratum
 Reponis ad Decembrem,
 Lætus per universum
 Incontinenter annum.

Te nulla lux relinquit,
 Te nulla nox revisit,
 Non musicæ vacantem,
 Crisve non solutum :
 Quin amplius canendo,
 Quin amplius fruendo,
 Ætatulam, vel omni,
 Quam nos homunciones
 Absumimus querendo,
 Ætate longiorem.

III. THE CRICKET.

TRANSLATION OF THE FOREGOING.

LITTLE inmate, full of mirth,
 Chirping on my kitchen hearth,
 Wheresoe'er be thine abode,
 Always harbinger of good,
 Pay me for thy warm retreat
 With a song more soft and sweet ;
 In return thou shalt receive
 Such a strain as I can give.

Thus thy praise shall be express'd,
 Inoffensive, welcome guest !
 While the rat is on the scout,
 And the mouse with curious snout,
 With what vermin else infest
 Ev'ry dish, and spoil the best ;
 Frisking thus before the fire,
 Thou hast all thine heart's desire.

Though in voice and shape they be
 Form'd as if akin to thee,
 Thou surpassest, happier far,
 Happiest grasshoppers that are ;
 Theirs is but a summer's song
 Thine endures the winter long,
 Unimpair'd, and shrill, and clear,
 Melody throughout the year.

Neither night, nor dawn of day,
 Puts a period to thy play :
 Sing then—and extend thy span
 Far beyond the date of man.
 Wretched man, whose years are spent
 In repining discontent,
 Lives not, aged though he be,
 Half a span, compar'd with thee.

SIMILE AGIT IN SIMILE.

BY VINCENT BOURNE.

CRISTATUS, pictisque ad Thaida Psittacus alis,
 Missus ab Eoo munus amante venit.
Ancillis mandat primam formare loquelam,
 Archididascalie dat sibi Thais opus.
Psittace, ait Thais, fingitque sonantia molle
 Basia, quæ docilis molle refingit avis.
Jam captat, jam dimidiat tyrunculus; et jam
 Integrat auditos articulatque sonos.
Psittace mi pulcher pulchelle, hera dicit alumno,
 Psittace mi pulcher, reddit alumnus heræ.
Jamque canit, ridet, deciesque ægrotat in horâ,
 Et vocat ancillas nomine quamque suo.
Multaque scurratur mendax, et multa jocatur,
 Et lepidò populum detinet augurio.
Nunc tremulum illudet fratrem, qui suspicit, et Pol
 Carnalis, quisquis te docet, inquit, homo est;
Argutæ nunc stridet antris argutulus instar;
 Respicit, et nebulo es, quisquis es, inquit anus.
Quando fuit melior tyro, meliorve magistra!
 Quando duo ingentis tam coiære pares!
Ardua discenti nulla est, res nulla docenti
 Ardua! cum doceat foemina, discat avis.

IV. THE PARROT.

TRANSLATION OF THE FOREGOING.

IN painted plumes superbly dress'd,
 A native of the gorgeous east,
 By many a billow toss'd,
 Poll gains at length the British shore,
 Part of the captain's precious store.
 A present to his toast.

Belinda's maids are soon preferr'd,
 To teach him now and then a word,
 As Poll can master it ;
 But 'tis her own important charge,
 To qualify him more at large,
 And make him quite a wit.

Sweet Poll ! his doating mistress cries,
 Sweet Poll ! the mimic bird replies ;
 And calls aloud for sack.
 She next instructs him in the kiss ;
 'Tis now a little one like Miss,
 And now a hearty smack.

At first he aims at what he hears ;
 And, list'ning close with both his ears,
 Just catches at the sound ;
 But soon articulates aloud,
 Much to th' amusement of the crowd,
 And stuns the neighbours round.

A querulous old woman's voice
 His hum'rous talent next employs ;
 He scolds, and gives the lie.
 And now he sings, and now is sick,
 Here Sally, Susan, come, come quick,
 Poor Poll is like to die !

Belinda and her bird ! 'tis rare,
 To meet with such a well-match'd pair,
 The language and the tone,
 Each character in ev'ry part
 Sustain'd with so much grace and art,
 And both in unison.

When children first begin to spell,
 And stammer out a syllable,
 We think them tedious creatures ;
 But difficulties soon abate,
 When birds are to be taught to prate,
 And women are the teachers.

TRANSLATION OF PRIOR'S CHLOE AND EUPHELIA.

MERCATOR, vigiles oculos ut fallere possit,
 Nomine sub ficto trans mare mittit opes ;
 Lenè sonat liquidumque meis Euphelia chordis,
 Sed solam exoptant te, mea vota, Chlœe.

Ad speculum ornabat nitidos Euphelia crines,
 Cum dixit mea lux, Heus, cane, sume lyram.
 Namque lyram juxta positam cum carmine vidit,
 Suave quidem carmen dulcisonamque lyram.

Fila lyræ vocemque paro, suspiria surgunt,
 Et miscent numeris murmura mœsta meis,
 Dumque tuæ memoro laudes, Euphelia, formæ,
 Tota anima intereà pendet ab ore Chlœs.

Subrubet illa pudore, et contrahit altera frontem,
 Me torquet mea mens conscia, psallo, tremo ;
 Atque Cupidineâ dixit Dea cincta coronâ,
 Heu ! fallendi artem quam didicere parum.

THE DIVERTING

HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN ;

*Showing how he went farther than he intended, and
 came safe home again.*

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen
 Of credit and renown,
 A train-band captain eke was he
 Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
 Though wedded we have been
 These twice ten tedious years, yet we
 No holiday have seen.

2 a 2

To-morrow is our wedding-day,
 And we will then repair
 Unto the Bell at Edmonton
 All in a chaise and pair.

My sister and my sister's child,
 Myself, and children three,
 Will fill the chaise ; so you must ride
 On horseback after we.

He soon replied, I do admire
 Of womankind but one,
 And you are she, my dearest dear,
 Therefore it shall be done.

I am a linendraper bold,
 As all the world doth know,
 And my good friend the calender
 Will lend his horse to go.

Quoth Mrs Gilpin, That's well said ;
 And for that wine is dear,
 We will be furnish'd with our own,
 Which is both bright and clear.

John Gilpin kiss'd his loving wife ;
 O'erjoy'd was he to find,
 That, though on pleasure she was bent,
 She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
 But yet was not allow'd
 To drive up to the door, lest all
 Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stay'd,
 Where they did all get in ;
 Six precious souls, and all agog
 To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
 Were never folk so glad,
 The stones did rattle underneath,
 As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
 Seiz'd fast the flowing mane,
 And up he got, in haste to ride,
 But soon came down again ;

For saddletree scarce reach'd had he,
 His journey to begin,
 When, turning round his head, he saw
 Three customers come in.

So down he came ; for loss of time,
 Although it griev'd him sore,
 Yet loss of pence, full well he knew
 Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
 Were suited to their mind,
 When Betty screaming came down stairs,
 ' The wine is left behind !'

Good lack ! quoth he—yet bring it me,
 My leathern belt likewise,
 In which I bear my trusty sword,
 When I do exercise.

Now mistress Gilpin (careful soul !)
 Had two stone bottles found,
 To hold the liquor that she lov'd,
 And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
 Through which the belt he drew,
 And hung a bottle on each side,
 To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
 Equipp'd from top to toe,
 His long red cloak, well brush'd and neat,
 He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
 Upon his nimble steed,
 Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
 With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
 Beneath his well-shod feet,
 The snorting beast began to trot,
 Which gall'd him in his seat.

So, Fair and softly, John he cried,
 But John he cried in vain ;
 That trot became a gallop soon,
 In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must,
 Who cannot sit upright,
 He grasp'd the mane with both his hands,
 And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
 Had handled been before,
 What thing upon his back had got
 Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought ;
 Away went hat and wig ;
 He little dreamt, when he set out,
 Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
 Like streamer long and gay,
 Till, loop and button failing both,
 At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
 The bottles he had slung ;
 A bottle swinging at each side,
 As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,
 Up flew the windows all ;
 And ev'ry soul cried out, Well done !
 As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he ?
 His fame soon spread around,
 He carries weight ! he rides a race !
 'Tis for a thousand pound !

And still, as fast as he drew near,
 'Twas wonderful to view,
 How in a trice the turnpike men
 Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
 His reeking head full low,
 The bottles twain behind his back
 Were shatter'd at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
 Most piteous to be seen,
 Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
 As they had basted been.

But still he seem'd to carry weight,
 With leathern girdle brac'd ;
 For all might see the bottle necks
 Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
 These gambols he did play,
 Until he came unto the Wash
 Of Edmonton so gay ;

And there he threw the wash about
 On both sides of the way,
 Just like unto a trundling mop,
 Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
 From the balcony spied
 Her tender husband, wond'ring much
 To see how he did ride.

Stop, stop, John Gilpin !—Here's the house—
 They all at once did cry ;
 The dinner waits, and we are tir'd ;
 Said Gilpin—So am I !

But yet his horse was not a whit
 Inclined to tarry there ;
 For why ?—his owner had a house
 Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
 Shot by an archer strong ;
 So did he fly—which brings me to
 The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin out of breath,
 And sore against his will,
 Till at his friend the calender's
 His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amaz'd to see
 His neighbour in such trim,
 Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
 And thus accosted him :

What news ? what news ? your tidings tell ;
 Tell me you must and shall—
 Say why bareheaded you are come,
 Or why you come at all ?

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
 And lov'd a timely joke ;
 And thus unto the calender
 In merry guise he spoke :

I came because your horse would come ;
 And, if I well forebode,
 My hat and wig will soon be here,
 They are upon the road.

The calender, right glad to find
 His friend in merry pin,
 Return'd him not a single word,
 But to the house went in ;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig ;
 A wig that flow'd behind,
 A hat not much the worse for wear,
 Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
 Thus show'd his ready wit :
 My head is twice as big as yours,
 They therefore needs must fit.

But let me scrape the dirt away,
 That hangs upon your face ;
 And stop and eat, for well you may
 Be in a hungry case.

Said John, It is my wedding-day,
 And all the world would stare,
 If wife should dine at Edmonton,
 And I should dine at Ware.

So turning to his horse, he said,
 I am in haste to dine ;
 'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
 You shall go back for mine.

Ah luckless speech, and bootless boast !
 For which he paid full dear ;
 For, while he spake, a braying ass
 Did sing most loud and clear ;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
 Had heard a lion roar,
 And gallopp'd off with all his might,
 As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
 Went Gilpin's hat and wig :
 He lost them sooner than at first,
 For why ?—they were too big.

Now Mrs Gilpin, when she saw
 Her husband posting down
 Into the country far away,
 She pull'd out half a crown ;

And thus unto the youth she said,
 That drove them to the Bell,
 This shall be yours, when you bring back
 My husband safe and well.

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
 John coming back amain ;
 Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
 By catching at his rein ;

But not performing what he meant,
 And gladly would have done,
 The frightened steed he frightened more,
 And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
 Went postboy at his heels,
 The postboy's horse right glad to miss
 The lumb'ring of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
 Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
 With postboy scamp'ring in the rear,
 They rais'd the hue and cry :—

Stop thief ! stop thief !—a highwayman !
 Not one of them was mute ;
 And all and each that pass'd that way
 Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
 Flew open in short space ;
 The toll-men thinking as before,
 That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
 For he got first to town ;
 Nor stopp'd till where he had got up
 He did again get down.

Now let us sing, long live the king,
 And Gilpin long live he ;
 And, when he next doth ride abroad,
 May I be there to see !

AN EPISTLE

TO

AN AFFLICTED PROTESTANT LADY IN FRANCE.

MADAM,

A STRANGER'S purpose in these lays
 Is to congratulate, and not to praise.
 To give the creature the Creator's due
 Were sin in me, and an offence to you.
 From man to man, or e'en to woman paid,
 Praise is the medium of a knavish trade,
 A coin by craft for folly's use design'd,
 Spurious, and only current with the blind.
 The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
 Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown ;
 No trav'ler ever reach'd that blest abode,
 Who found not thorns and briers in his road.
 The World may dance along the flow'ry plain,
 Cheer'd as they go by many a sprightly strain,
 Where Nature has her mossy velvet spread,
 With unshod feet they yet securely tread,
 Admonish'd, scorn the caution and the friend,
 Bent all on pleasure, heedless of its end.
 But he, who knew what human hearts would prove,
 How slow to learn the dictates of his love,
 That, hard by nature and of stubborn will,
 A life of ease would make them harder still,
 In pity to the souls his grace design'd
 To rescue from the ruins of mankind,
 Call'd for a cloud to darken all their years,
 And said, ' Go, spend them in the vale of tears.'
 O balmy gales of soul-reviving air !
 O salutary streams, that murmur there !
 These flowing from the fount of grace above,
 Those breath'd from lips of everlasting love.
 The flinty soil indeed their feet annoys ;
 Chill blasts of trouble nip their springing joys ;

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An envious world will interpose its frown,
 To mar delights superior to its own ;
 And many a pang, experienc'd still within,
 Reminds them of their hated inmate, Sin ;
 But ills of ev'ry shape and ev'ry name,
 Transform'd to blessings, miss their cruel aim ;
 And ev'ry moment's calm that soothes the breast,
 Is giv'n in earnest of eternal rest.

Ah, be not sad, although thy lot be cast
 Far from the flock, and in a boundless waste !
 No shepherds' tents within thy view appear,
 But the chief Shepherd even there is near ;
 Thy tender sorrows and thy plaintive strain
 Flow in a foreign land, but not in vain ;
 Thy tears all issue from a source divine,
 And ev'ry drop bespeaks a Saviour thine—
 So once in Gideon's fleece the dew's were found,
 And drought on all the drooping herbs around.

TO THE

REV. W. CAWTHORNE UNWIN.

UNWIN, I should but ill repay
 The kindness of a friend,
 Whose worth deserves as warm a lay
 As ever friendship penn'd,
 Thy name omitted in a page,
 That would reclaim a vicious age.

A union form'd, as mine with thee,
 Not rashly, or in sport,
 May be as fervent in degree,
 And faithful in its sort,
 And may as rich in comfort prove,
 As that of true fraternal love.

The bud inserted in the rind,
 The bud of peach or rose,
 Adorns, though diff'ring in its kind,
 The stock whereon it grows,

With flow'r as sweet, or fruit as fair,
As if produc'd by Nature there.

Not rich, I render what I may,
I seize thy name in haste,
And place it in this first essay,
Lest it should prove the last.
'Tis where it should be—in a plan,
That holds in view the good of man.

The poet's lyre, to fix his fame,
Should be the poet's heart ;
Affection lights a brighter flame
Than ever blaz'd by art.
No muses on these lines attend,
I sink the poet in the friend.

AN EPISTLE TO JOSEPH HILL, Esq.

DEAR JOSEPH—five and twenty years ago—
Alas how time escapes !—'tis even so—
With frequent intercourse, and always sweet,
And always friendly, we were wont to cheat
A tedious hour—and now we never meet !
As some grave gentleman in Terence says
('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days),
Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings—
Strange fluctuation of all human things !
True. Changes will befall, and friends may part,
But distance only cannot change the heart :
And, were I call'd to prove th' assertion true,
One proof should serve—a reference to you.

Whence comes it then, that in the wane of life,
Though nothing have occur'd to kindle strife,
We find the friends we fancied we had won,
Though num'rous once, reduc'd to few or none ?
Can gold grow worthless, that has stood the touch ?
No ; gold they seem'd, but they were never such.

Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe,
 Swinging the parlour-door upon its hinge,
 Dreading a negative, and overaw'd
 Lest he should trespass, begg'd to go abroad.
 Go, fellow !—whither ?—turning short about—
 Nay. Stay at home—you're always going out.
 'Tis but a step, sir, just at the street's end.—
 For what ?—Ah please you, sir, to see a friend.—
 A friend ! Horatio cried, and seem'd to start—
 Yea marry shalt thou, and with all my heart.—
 And fetch my cloak ; for, though the night be raw,
 I'll see him too—the first I ever saw.

I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,
 And was his plaything often when a child ;
 But somewhat at that moment pinch'd him close,
 Else he was seldom bitter or morose.
 Perhaps his confidence just then betray'd,
 His grief might prompt him with the speech he made
 Perhaps 'twas mere good humour gave it birth,
 The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth.
 Howe'er it was, his language, in my mind,
 Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.

But not to moralize too much, and strain
 To prove an evil, of which all complain
 (I hate long arguments verbosely spun),
 One story more, dear Hill, and I have done.
 Once on a time an emp'ror, a wise man,
 No matter where, in China or Japan,
 Decreed, that whosoever should offend
 Against the well-known duties of a friend,
 Convicted once should ever after wear
 But half a coat, and show his bosom bare.
 The punishment importing this, no doubt,
 That all was naught within, and all found out.

O happy Britain ! we have not to fear
 Such hard and arbitrary measure here ;
 Else, could a law, like that which I relate,
 Once have the sanction of our triple state,
 Some few, that I have known in days of old,
 Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold ;

While you, my friend, whatever wind should blow,
Might traverse England safely to and fro,
An honest man, close button'd to the chin,
Broad cloth without, and a warm heart within.

TO THE

REVEREND MR NEWTON.

An Invitation into the Country.

THE swallows in their torpid state
Compose their useless wing,
And bees in hives as idly wait
The call of early Spring.

The keenest frost that binds the stream,
The wildest wind that blows,
Are neither felt nor fear'd by them,
Secure of their repose.

But man, all feeling and awake,
The gloomy scene surveys ;
With present ills his heart must ache
And pant for brighter days.

Old Winter, halting o'er the mead,
Bids me and Mary mourn ;
But lovely Spring peeps o'er his head,
And whispers your return.

Then April, with her sister May,
Shall chase him from the bow'rs,
And weave fresh garlands ev'ry day,
To crown the smiling hours.

And if a tear, that speaks regret
Of happier times, appear,
A glimpse of joy, that we have met,
Shall shine and dry the tear.

CATHARINA,

ADDRESSED TO MISS STAPLETON,
(NOW MRS COURTNEY.)

SHE came—she is gone—we have met—
And meet perhaps never again ;
The sun of that moment is set,
And seems to have risen in vain.
Catharina has fled like a dream—
(So vanishes pleasure, alas !)
But has left a regret and esteem,
That will not so suddenly pass.

The last ev'ning ramble we made,
Catharina, Maria, and I,
Our progress was often delay'd
By the nightingale warbling nigh.
We paus'd under many a tree,
And much she was charm'd with a tone
Less sweet to Maria and me,
Who so lately had witness'd her own.

My numbers that day she had sung,
And gave them a grace so divine,
As only her musical tongue
Could infuse into numbers of mine.
The longer I heard, I esteem'd
The work of my fancy the more,
And e'en to myself never seem'd
So tuneful a poet before.

Though the pleasures of London exceed
In number the days of the year,
Catharina, did nothing impede,
Would feel herself happier here ;
For the close-woven arches of limes
On the banks of our river, I know,
Are sweeter to her many times
Than aught that the city can show

So it is, when the mind is endu'd
 With a well-judging taste from above ;
 Then, whether embellish'd or rude,
 'Tis nature alone that we love.
 The achievements of art may amuse,
 May even our wonder excite,
 But groves, hills, and valleys, diffuse
 A lasting, a sacred delight.

Since then in the rural recess
 Catharina alone can rejoice,
 May it still be her lot to possess
 The scene of her sensible choice !
 To inhabit a mansion remote
 From the clatter of street-pacing steeds,
 And by Philomel's annual note
 To measure the life that she leads.

With her book, and her voice, and her lyre,
 To wing all her moments at home ;
 And with scenes that new rapture inspire,
 As oft as it suits her to roam ;
 She will have just the life she prefers,
 With little to hope or to fear,
 And ours would be pleasant as hers,
 Might we view her enjoying it here.

THE MORALIZER CORRECTED.

A TALE.

A HERMIT, (or if 'chance you hold
 That title now too trite and old)
 A man, once young, who liv'd retir'd
 As hermit could have well desir'd,
 His hours of study clos'd at last,
 And finish'd his concise repast,
 Stopped his cruise, replac'd his book
 Within its customary nook,

And, staff in hand, set forth to share
 The sober cordial of sweet air,
 Like Isaac, with a mind applied
 To serious thought at ev'ningtide.
 Autumnal rains had made it chill,
 And from the trees, that fring'd his hill,
 Shades slanting at the close of day
 Chill'd more his else delightful way.
 Distant a little mile he spied
 A western bank's still sunny side,
 And right toward the favour'd place
 Proceeding with his nimblest pace,
 In hope to bask a little yet,
 Just reach'd it when the sun was set.

Your hermit, young and jovial sirs !
 Learns something from whate'er occurs—
 And hence, he said, my mind computes
 The real worth of man's pursuits.
 His object chosen, wealth or fame,
 Or other sublunary game,
 Imagination to his view
 Presents it deck'd with ev'ry hue,
 That can seduce him not to spare
 His pow'rs of best exertion there,
 But youth, health, vigour, to expend
 On so desirable an end.
 Ere long approach life's ev'ning shades,
 The glow, that fancy gave it, fades ;
 And, earn'd too late, it wants the grace
 That first engag'd him in the chase.

True, answer'd an angelic guide,
 Attendant at the senior's side—
 But whether all the time it cost,
 To urge the fruitless chase be lost,
 Must be decided by the worth
 Of that, which call'd his ardour forth.
 Trifles pursu'd, whate'er th' event,
 Must cause him shame or discontent ;
 A vicious object still is worse,
 Successful there he wins a curse ;

But he, whom e'en in life's last stage
 Endeavours laudable engage,
 Is paid, at least in peace of mind,
 And sense of having well design'd ;
 And if, ere he attain his end,
 His sun precipitate descend,
 A brighter prize than that he meant
 Shall recompense his mere intent.
 No virtuous wish can bear a date
 Either too early or too late.

THE FAITHFUL BIRD.

THE greenhouse is my summer seat ;
 My shrubs displac'd from that retreat
 Enjoy'd the open air ;
 Two goldfinches, whose sprightly song
 Had been their mutual solace long,
 Liv'd happy pris'ners there.

They sang as blithe as finches sing,
 That flutter loose on golden wing,
 And frolic where they list ;
 Strangers to liberty, 'tis true,
 But that delight they never knew,
 And therefore never miss'd.

But nature works in ev'ry breast,
 With force not easily suppress'd ;
 And Dick felt some desires,
 That, after many an effort vain,
 Instructed him at length to gain
 A pass between his wires.

The open windows seem'd t' invite
 The freeman to a farewell flight ;
 But Tom was still confin'd ;
 And Dick, although his way was clear,
 Was much too gen'rous and sincere,
 To leave his friend behind.

So settling on his cage, by play,
 And chirp, and kiss, he seem'd to say,
 You must not live alone—
 Nor would he quit that chosen stand
 Till I, with slow and cautious hand,
 Return'd him to his own.

O ye, who never taste the joys
 Of Friendship, satisfied with noise,
 Fandango, ball, and rout !
 Blush, when I tell you how a bird,
 A prison with a friend preferr'd
 To liberty without.



THE NEEDLESS ALARM.

A TALE.

THERE is a field, through which I often pass,
 Thick overspread with moss and silky grass,
 Adjoining close to Kilwick's echoing wood,
 Where oft the bitch-fox hides her hapless brood,
 Reserv'd to solace many a neighb'ring squire,
 That he may follow them through brake and brier,
 Contusion hazarding of neck, or spine,
 Which rural gentlemen call sport divine.
 A narrow brook, by rushy banks conceal'd,
 Runs in a bottom, and divides the field ;
 Oaks intersperse it, that had once a head,
 But now wear crests of oven-wood instead ;
 And where the land slopes to its wat'ry bourn,
 Wide yawns a gulf beside a ragged thorn ;
 Bricks line the sides, but shiver'd long ago,
 And horrid brambles intertwine below ;
 A hollow scoop'd, I judge, in ancient time,
 For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.

Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,
 With which the fieldfare, wintry guest, is fed ;

Nor Autumn yet had brush'd from ev'ry spray,
 With her chill hand, the mellow leaves away ;
 But corn was hous'd, and beans were in the stack,
 Now therefore issu'd forth the spotted pack,
 With tails high mounted, ears hung low, and throats,
 With a whole gamut fill'd of heav'nly notes,
 For which, alas ! my destiny severe,
 Though ears she gave me two, gave me no ear.

The Sun, accomplishing his early march,
 His lamp now planted on Heav'n's topmost arch,
 When, exercise and air my only aim,
 And heedless whither, to that field I came,
 Ere yet with ruthless joy the happy hound
 Told hill and dale that Reynard's track was found,
 Or with the high-raised horn's melodious clang
 All Kilwick* and all Dingleberry* rang.

Sheep graz'd the field ; some with soft bosom
 press'd
 The herb as soft, while nibbling stray'd the rest ;
 Nor noise was heard but of the hasty brook,
 Struggling, detain'd in many a petty nook.
 All seem'd so peaceful, that, from them convey'd,
 To me their peace by kind contagion spread.

But when the huntsman, with distended cheek,
 'Gan make his instrument of music speak,
 And from within the wood that crash was heard,
 Though not a hound from whom it burst appear'd,
 The sheep recumbent, and the sheep that graz'd,
 All huddling into phalanx, stood and gaz'd,
 Admiring, terrified, the novel strain,
 Then cours'd the field around, and cours'd it round
 again ;

But, recollecting with a sudden thought,
 That flight in circles urg'd advanc'd them nought,
 They gather'd close around the old pit's brink,
 And thought again—but knew not what to think.

The man to solitude accustom'd long
 Perceives in ev'ry thing that lives a tongue ;

* Two woods belonging to John Throckmorton, Esq.

Not animals alone, but shrubs and trees
 Have speech for him, and understood with ease;
 After long drought, when rains abundant fall,
 He hears the herbs and flow'rs rejoicing all;
 Knows what the freshness of their hue implies,
 How glad they catch the largess of the skies;
 But, with precision nicer still, the mind
 He scans of ev'ry locomotive kind;
 Birds of all feather, beasts of ev'ry name,
 That serve mankind, or shun them, wild or tame;
 The looks and gestures of their griefs and fears
 Have all articulation in his ears;
 He spells them true by intuition's light,
 And needs no glossary to set him right.

This truth premis'd was needful as a text,
 To win due credence to what follows next.

A while they mus'd; surveying ev'ry face,
 Thou hadst suppos'd them of superior race;
 Their periwigs of wool, and fears combin'd,
 Stamp'd on each countenance such marks of mind,
 That sage they seem'd, as lawyers o'er a doubt,
 Which, puzzling long, at last they puzzle out;
 Or academic tutors, teaching youths,
 Sure ne'er to want them, mathematic truths;
 When thus a mutton, statelier than the rest,
 A ram, the ewes and wethers sad address'd.

Friends! we have liv'd too long. I never heard
 Sounds such as these, so worthy to be fear'd.
 Could I believe, that winds for ages pent
 In earth's dark womb have found at last a vent,
 And from their prison-house below arise,
 With all these hideous howlings to the skies,
 I could be much compos'd, nor should appear,
 For such a cause, to feel the slightest fear.
 Yourselves have seen, what time the thunders roll'd,
 All night, me resting quiet in the fold.
 Or heard we that tremendous bray alone,
 I could expound the melancholy tone;
 Should deem it by our old companion made,
 The ass; for he, we know, has lately stray'd,

And being lost perhaps, and wand'ring wide,
 Might be suppos'd to clamour for a guide.
 But ah ! those dreadful yells what soul can hear
 That owns a carcass, and not quake for fear ?
 Dæmons produce them doubtless, brazen-claw'd
 And fang'd with brass the dæmons are abroad ;
 I hold it therefore wisest and most fit,
 That, life to save, we leap into the pit.

Him answer'd then his loving mate and true,
 But more discreet than he, a Cambrian ewe.

How ? leap into the pit our life to save ?
 To save our life leap all into the grave ?
 For can we find it less ? Contemplate first
 The depth how awful ! falling there, we burst :
 Or should the brambles, interpos'd, our fall
 In part abate, that happiness were small ;
 For with a race like theirs no chance I see
 Of peace or ease to creatures clad as we.
 Meantime, noise kills not. Be it Dapple's bray,
 Or be it not, or be it whose it may,
 And rush those other sounds, that seem by tongues
 Of dæmons utter'd, from whatever lungs,
 Sounds are but sounds ; and, till the cause appear,
 We have at least commodious standing here.
 Come fiend, come fury, giant, monster, blast
 From earth or hell, we can but plunge at last.

While thus she spake, I fainter heard the peals,
 For Reynard, close attended at his heels
 By panting dog, tir'd man, and spatter'd horse,
 Through mere good fortune, took a diff'rent course.
 The flock grew calm again ; and I, the road
 Foll'wing, that led me to my own abode,
 Much wonder'd, that the silly sheep had found
 Such cause of terrour in an empty sound,
 So sweet to huntsman, gentleman, and hound.

MORAL.

Beware of desp'rate steps. The darkest day,
 Live till to-morrow, will have pass'd away.

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BOADICEA.

AN ODE.

WHEN the British warrior queen,
 Bleeding from the Roman rods,
 Sought, with an indignant mien,
 Counsel of her country's gods,

Sage beneath a spreading oak
 Sat the Druid, hoary chief ;
 Ev'ry burning word he spoke
 Full of rage, and full of grief.

Princess ! if our aged eyes
 Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,
 'Tis because resentment ties
 All the terrors of our tongues.

Rome shall perish—write that word
 In the blood that she has spilt ;
 Perish, hopeless and abhorr'd,
 Deep in ruin as in guilt.

Rome, for empire far renown'd,
 Tramples on a thousand states ;
 Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—
 Hark ! the Gaul is at her gates !

Other Romans shall arise,
 Heedless of a soldier's name ;
 Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,
 Harmony the path to fame.

Then the progeny that springs
 From the forests of our land,
 Arm'd with thunder, clad with wings,
 Shall a wider world command.

Regions Cæsar never knew
 Thy posterity shall sway ;
 Where his eagles never flew,
 None invincible as they.

Such the bard's prophetic words,
 Pregnant with celestial fire,
 Bending as he swept the chords
 Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch's pride,
 Felt them in her bosom glow :
 Rush'd to battle, fought and died ;
 Dying, hurl'd them at the foe.

Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
 Heav'n awards the vengeance due ;
 Empire is on us bestow'd,
 Shame and ruin wait for you.

HEROISM.

THERE was a time when *Ætna's* silent fire
 Slept unperceiv'd, the mountain yet entire ;
 When, conscious of no danger from below,
 She tower'd a cloud-capt pyramid of snow.
 No thunders shook with deep intestine sound
 The blooming groves that girdled her around.
 Her unctuous olives, and her purple vines,
 (Unfelt the fury of those bursting mines)
 The peasant's hopes, and not in vain, assur'd,
 In peace upon her sloping sides matur'd.
 When on a day, like that of the last doom,
 A conflagration lab'ring in her womb,
 She teem'd and heav'd with an infernal birth,
 That shook the circling seas and solid earth.
 Dark and voluminous the vapours rise,
 And hang their horrors in the neighb'ring skies,
 While through the Stygian veil, that blots the day,
 In dazzling streaks the vivid lightnings play.
 But oh ! what muse, and in what pow'rs of song,
 Can trace the torrent as it burns along ?
 Havoc and devastation in the van,
 It marches o'er the prostrate works of man ;

Vines, olives, herbage, forests disappear,
And all the charms of a Sicilian year.

Revolving seasons, fruitless as they pass,
See it an uninform'd and idle mass ;
Without a soil t' invite the tiller's care,
Or blade, that might redeem it from despair.
Yet time at length (what will not time achieve ?)
Clothes it with earth, and bids the produce live.
Once more the spiry myrtle crowns the glade,
And ruminating flocks enjoy the shade.
O bliss precarious, and unsafe retreats,
O charming Paradise of short-liv'd sweets !
The selfsame gale, that wafts the fragrance round,
Brings to the distant ear a sullen sound :
Again the mountain feels th' imprison'd foe,
Again pours ruin on the vale below.
Ten thousand swains the wasted scene deplore,
That only future ages can restore.

Ye monarchs, whom the lure of honour draws,
Who write in blood the merits of your cause,
Who strike the blow, then plead your own defence,
Glory your aim, but justice your pretence ;
Behold in *Ætna's* emblematic fires,
The mischiefs your ambitious pride inspires !

Fast by the stream, that bounds your just domain,
And tells you where ye have a right to reign,
A nation dwells, not envious of your throne,
Studious of peace, their neighbours' and their own.
Ill-fated race ! how deeply must they rue
Their only crime, vicinity to you !
The trumpet sounds, your legions swarm abroad,
Through the ripe harvest lies their destin'd road ;
At ev'ry step beneath their feet they tread
The life of multitudes, a nation's bread !
Earth seems a garden in its loveliest dress
Before them, and behind a wilderness.
Famine, and Pestilence, her first-born son,
Attend to finish what the sword begun ;
And echoing praises, such as fiends might earn,
And Folly pays, resound at your return.

A calm succeeds—but Plenty, with her train
Of heart-felt joys, succeeds not soon again,
And years of pining indigence must show
What scourges are the gods that rule below.

Yet man, laborious man, by slow degrees,
(Such is his thirst of opulence and ease)
Plies all the sinews of industrious toil,
Gleans up the refuse of the gen'ral spoil,
Rebuilds the tow'rs, that smok'd upon the plain,
And the sun gilds the shining spires again.

Increasing commerce and reviving art
Renew the quarrel on the conqu'ror's part ;
And the sad lesson must be learn'd once more,
That wealth within is ruin at the door.
What are ye, monarchs, laurell'd heroes, say,
But *Ætnas* of the suff'ring world ye sway ?
Sweet Nature, stripp'd of her embroder'd robe,
Deplores the wasted regions of her globe ;
And stands a witness at Truth's awful bar,
To prove you there destroyers as ye are.

O place me in some Heav'n-protected isle,
Where Peace, and Equity, and Freedom smile ;
Where no volcano pours his fiery flood,
No crested warrior dips his plume in blood ;
Where Pow'r secures what Industry has won ;
Where to succeed is not to be undone ;
A land, that distant tyrants hate in vain,
In Britain's isle, beneath a George's reign !

ON THE RECEIPT OF
MY MOTHER'S PICTURE
OUT OF NORFOLK ;

The Gift of my Cousin, Ann Bodham.

O THAT those lips had language ! Life has pass'd
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same, that oft in childhood solac'd me :

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Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
 ' Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away !'
 The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
 (Blest be the art that can immortalize,
 The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
 To quench it) here shines on me still the same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
 O welcome guest, though unexpected here !
 Who bidd'st me honour with an artless song,
 Affectionate, a mother lost so long.
 I will obey, not willingly alone,
 But gladly, as the precept were her own :
 And, while that face renews my filial grief,
 Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
 Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
 A momentary dream, that thou art she.

My mother ! when I learn'd that thou wast dead
 Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed ?
 Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorr'wing son,
 Wretch even then, life's journey just begun ?
 Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unfelt, a kiss ;
 Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
 Ah that maternal smile ! it answers—Yes.
 I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
 I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
 And, turning from my nurs'ry window, drew
 A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu !
 But was it such ?—It was.—Where thou art gone,
 Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
 May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
 The parting word shall pass my lips no more !
 Thy maidens, griev'd themselves at my concern,
 Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
 What ardently I wish'd, I long believ'd,
 And, disappointed still, was still deceiv'd.
 By expectation ev'ry day beguil'd,
 Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.
 Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
 Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,

I learn'd at last submission to my lot,
But, though I less deplor'd thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
Children not thine have trod my nurs'ry floor ;
And where the gard'ner Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapp'd
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet cap,
'Tis now become a hist'ry little known,
That once we call'd the past'ral house our own.
Short-liv'd possession ! but the record fair,
That mem'ry keeps of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm, that has effac'd
A thousand other themes less deeply trac'd.
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou might'st know me safe and warmly laid ;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit, or confectionary plum ;
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestow'd
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glow'd :
All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and breaks,
That humour interpos'd too often makes ;
All this still legible in mem'ry's page,
And still to be so to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
Such honours to thee as my numbers may ;
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
Not scorn'd in Heav'n, though little notic'd here.

Could Time, his flight revers'd, restore the hours,
When, playing with thy vesture's tissu'd flow'rs,
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I prick'd them into paper with a pin,
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head, and smile)
Could those few pleasant days again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here ?
I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
Seems so to be desir'd, perhaps I might.—

But no—what here we call our life is such,
 So little to be lov'd, and thou so much,
 That I should ill requite thee to constrain
 Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
 (The storms all weather'd and the ocean cross'd)
 Shoots into port at some well-haven'd isle,
 Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
 There sits quiescent on the floods, that show
 Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
 While airs impregnated with incense play
 Around her, fanning light her streamers gay ;
 So thou, with sails how swift ! hast reach'd the shore,
 ' Where tempests never beat nor billows roar,'*
 And thy lov'd consort on the dang'rous tide
 Of life long since has anchor'd by thy side.
 But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
 Always from port withheld, always distress'd—
 Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-toss'd,
 Sails ripp'd, seams op'ning wide, and compass lost,
 And day by day some current's thwarting force
 Sets me more distant from a prosp'rous course.
 Yet O the thought, that thou art safe, and he !
 That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
 My boast is not, that I deduce my birth
 From loins enthron'd, and rulers of the earth ;
 But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
 The son of parents pass'd into the skies.
 And now, farewell—Time unrevok'd has run
 His wonted course, yet what I wish'd is done.
 By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
 I seem t' have liv'd my childhood o'er again ;
 To have renew'd the joys that once were mine,
 Without the sin of violating thine ;
 And, while the wings of Fancy still are free,
 And I can view this mimic show of thee,
 Time has but half succeeded in his theft—
 Thyself remov'd, thy pow'r to sooth me left.

* Garth.

ON FRIENDSHIP.

WHAT virtue can we name, or grace,
 But men unqualified and base
 Will boast it their possession ?
 Profusion apes the noble part
 Of liberality of heart,
 And dulness of discretion.

But as the gem of richest cost
 Is ever counterfeited most,
 So always imitation
 Employs the utmost skill she can
 To counterfeit the faithful man,
 The friend of long duration.

Some will pronounce me too severe ;
 But long experience speaks me clear ;
 Therefore that censure scorning,
 I will proceed to mark the shelves
 On which so many dash themselves,
 And give the simple warning.

Youth, unadmonish'd by a guide,
 Will trust to any fair outside,—
 An error soon corrected ;
 For who but learns with riper years,
 That man, when smoothest he appears,
 Is most to be suspected ?

But here again a danger lies,
 Lest, thus deluded by our eyes,
 And taking trash for treasure,
 We should when undeceiv'd conclude
 Friendship imaginary good,
 A mere Utopian pleasure.

An acquisition rather rare
 Is yet no subject of despair ;
 Nor should it seem distressful,
 If either on forbidden ground,
 Or where it was not to be found,
 We sought it unsuccessful.

No friendship will abide the test,
 That stands on sordid interest,
 And mean self-love erected ;
 Nor such as may a while subsist,
 'Twixt sensualist and sensualist,
 For vicious ends connected.

Who hopes a friend should have a heart,
 Himself well furnish'd for the part,
 And ready on occasion
 To show the virtue that he seeks ;
 For 'tis a union that bespeaks
 A just reciprocation.

A fretful temper will divide
 The closest knot that may be tied,
 By ceaseless sharp corrosion ;
 A temper passionate and fierce
 May suddenly your joys disperse
 At one immense explosion.

In vain the talkative unite
 With hope of permanent delight—
 The secret just committed,
 They drop through mere desire to prate,
 Forgetting its important weight,
 And by themselves outwitted.

How bright soe'er the prospect seems,
 All thoughts of friendship are but dreams,
 If envy chance to creep in ;

An envious man, if you succeed,
May prove a dangerous foe indeed,
But not a friend worth keeping.

As envy pines at good possess'd,
So jealousy looks forth distress'd
On good, that seems approaching ;
And, if success his steps attend,
Discerns a rival in a friend,
And hates him for encroaching.

Hence authors of illustrious name,
Unless belied by common fame,
Are sadly prone to quarrel,
To deem the wit a friend displays
So much of loss to their own praise,
And pluck each other's laurel.

A man renowned for repartee
Will seldom scruple to make free
With friendship's finest feeling,
Will thrust a dagger at your breast,
And tell you 'twas a special jest,
By way of balm for healing.

Beware of tattlers, keep your ear
Close stopt against the tales they bear,
Fruits of their own invention ;
The separation of chief friends
Is what their kindness most intends,—
Their sport is your dissension.

Friendship that wantonly admits
A joco-serious play of wits,
In brilliant altercation,
Is union such as indicates,
Like hand-in-hand insurance plates,
Danger of conflagration.

Some fickle creatures boast a soul
 True as the needle to the pole,
 Yet shifting like the weather;
 The needle's constancy forego
 For any novelty, and show
 Its variations rather.

Insensibility makes some
 Unseasonably deaf and dumb,
 When most you need their pity;
 'Tis waiting till the tears shall fall
 From Gog and Magog in Guildhall,—
 Those playthings of the city.

The great and small but rarely meet
 On terms of amity complete:
 The attempt would scarce be madder,
 Should any, from the bottom, hope
 At one huge stride to reach the top
 Of an erected ladder.

Courtier and patriot cannot mix
 Their het'rogenous politics
 Without an effervescence,
 Such as of salts with lemon juice,
 But which is rarely known to induce,
 Like that, a coalescence.

Religion should extinguish strife,
 And make a calm of human life;
 But even those who differ
 Only on topics left at large,
 How fiercely will they meet and charge!
 No combatants are stiffer.

To prove, alas! my main intent
 Needs no great cost of argument,
 No cutting and contriving—

Seeking a real friend we seem
T' adopt the chymist's golden dream,
With still less hope of thriving.

Then judge or e'er you choose your man,
As circumspectly as you can,
And, having made election,
See that no disrespect of yours,
Such as a friend but ill endures,
Enfeeble his affection.

It is not timber, lead, and stone,
An architect requires alone,
To finish a great building—
The palace were but half complete,
Could he by any chance forget
The carving and the gilding.

As similarity of mind,
Or something not to be defin'd,
First rivets our attention ;
So manners decent and polite,
The same we practis'd at first sight,
Must save it from declension.

The man who hails you Tom or Jack,
And proves by thumping on your back
His sense of your great merit,
Is such a friend that one had need
Be very much his friend indeed
To pardon or to bear it.

Some friends make this their prudent plan,
' Say little, and hear all you can.'
Safe policy, but hateful—
So barren sands imbibe the show'r,
But render neither fruit nor flow'r,
Unpleasant and ungrateful.

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They whisper trivial things and small ;
But to communicate at all

Things serious deem improper ;
Their feculence and froth they show,
But keep the best contents below,
Just like a simmering copper.

These samples—for alas ! at last
These are but samples, and a taste
Of evils yet unmention'd—
May prove the task a task indeed,
In which 'tis much if we succeed,
However well-intention'd.

Pursue the theme, and you shall find
A disciplin'd and furnish'd mind
To be at least expedient,
And, after summing all the rest,
Religion ruling in the breast
A principal ingredient.

True friendship has, in short, a grace
More than terrestrial in its face,
That proves it heaven-descended,
Man's love of woman not so pure,
Nor, when sincerest, so secure
To last till life is ended.



THE ENCHANTMENT DISSOLVED.

BLINDED in youth by Satan's arts,
The world to our unpractis'd hearts
A flattering prospect shows ;
Our fancy forms a thousand schemes
Of gay delights, and golden dreams,
And undisturb'd repose.

So in the desert's dreary waste,
 By magic power produc'd in haste,
 (As ancient fables say)
 Castles, and groves, and music sweet,
 The senses of the trav'ler meet,
 And stop him in his way.

But while he listens with surprise,
 The charm dissolves, the vision dies,
 'Twas but enchanted ground :
 Thus if the Lord our spirit touch,
 The world, which promis'd us so much,
 A wilderness is found.

At first we start and feel distress'd,
 Convinc'd we never can have rest
 In such a wretched place ;
 But—He whose mercy breaks the charm,
 Reveals his own Almighty arm,
 And bids us seek his face.

Then we begin to live indeed,
 When from our sin and bondage freed
 By this beloved Friend
 We follow him from day to day,
 Assur'd of grace through all the way,
 And glory at the end.



LIGHT SHINING OUT OF DARKNESS.

GOD moves in a mysterious way,
 His wonders to perform ;
 He plants his footsteps in the sea,
 And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
 Of never-failing skill,
 He treasures up his bright designs,
 And works his sov'reign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
 The clouds ye so much dread
 Are big with mercy, and shall break
 In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
 But trust him for his grace ;
 Behind a frowning Providence
 He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
 Unfolding ev'ry hour ;
 The bud may have a bitter taste,
 But sweet will be the flow'r.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,*
 And scan his work in vain ;
 God is his own interpreter,
 And he will make it plain.



TEMPTATION.

THE billows swell, the winds are high,
 Clouds overcast my wintry sky ;
 Out of the depths to thee I call,
 My fears are great, my strength is small.

* John xlii, 7.

O Lord, the pilot's part perform,
 And guard and guide me through the storm ;
 Defend me from each threat'ning ill,
 Control the waves, say, ' Peace, be still.'

Amidst the roaring of the sea,
 My soul still hangs her hope on thee ;
 Thy constant love, thy faithful care,
 Is all that saves me from despair.

Dangers of every shape and name
 Attend the followers of the Lamb,
 Who leave the world's deceitful shore,
 And leave it to return no more.

Though tempest-toss'd and half a wreck,
 My Saviour through the floods I seek ;
 Let neither winds nor stormy main
 Force back my shatter'd bark again.

SUBMISSION.

O LORD, my best desire fulfil,
 And help me to resign
 Life, health, and comfort, to thy will,
 And make thy pleasure mine.

Why should I shrink at thy command,
 Whose love forbids my fears ?
 Or tremble at the gracious hand
 That wipes away my tears ?

No, rather let me freely yield
 What most I prize to Thee ;
 Who never hast a good withheld,
 Or wilt withhold from me.

Thy favour, all my journey through
 Thou art engag'd to grant ;
 What else I want, or think I do,
 'Tis better still to want.

Wisdom and mercy guide my way,
 Shall I resist them both ?
 A poor blind creature of a day,
 And crush'd before the moth !

But ah ! my inward spirit cries,
 Still bind me to thy sway ;
 Else the next cloud that veils the skies,
 Drives all these thoughts away.

STANZAS

*Subjoined to the Yearly Bill of Mortality of the
 Parish of All-Saints, Northampton,*
 Anno Domini, 1787.*

*Pallida Mors sequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas,
 Regumque turres.* Horace.

Pale Death with equal foot strikes wide the door
 Of royal halls, and hovels of the poor.

WHILE thirteen moons saw smoothly run
 The Nen's barge-laden wave,
 All these, life's rambling journey done,
 Have found their home, the grave.

Was man (frail always) made more frail
 Than in foregoing years ?
 Did famine or did plague prevail,
 That so much death appears ?

No ; these were vig'rous as their sires,
 Nor plague nor famine came :
 This annual tribute Death requires,
 And never waves his claim.

Like crowded forest-trees we stand,
 And some are mark'd to fall ;
 The axe will smite at God's command,
 And soon shall smite us all.

* Composed for John Cox, parish clerk of Northampton.

Green as the bay tree, ever green,
 With its new foliage on,
 The gay, the thoughtless, have I seen,
 I pass'd—and they were gone.

Read, ye that run, the awful truth
 With which I charge my page ;
 A worm is in the bud of youth,
 And at the root of age.

No present health can health ensure
 For yet an hour to come ;
 No med'cine, though it oft can cure,
 Can always bank the tomb.

And O ! that humble as my lot,
 And scorn'd as is my strain,
 These truths, though known, too much forgot,
 I may not teach in vain.

So prays your clerk with all his heart,
 And ere he quits the pen,
 Begs you for once to take *his* part,
 And answer all—Amen !



ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

For the year 1788.

Quod adest, memento
 Componere sequas. Cætera fluminis
 Ritu struantur. Hoc.
 Improve the present hour, for all beside
 Is a mere feather on a torrent's tide.

COULD I, from Heav'n inspir'd, as sure presage
 To whom the rising year shall prove his last,
 As I can number in my punctual page,
 And item down the victims of the past ;

How each would trembling wait the mournful sheet,
 On which the press might stamp him next to die ;
 And, reading here his sentence, how replete
 With anxious musing, Heav'nward turn his eye !

Time then would seem more precious than the joys,
 In which he sports away the treasure now ;
 And pray'r more seasonable than the noise
 Of drunkards, or the music-drawing bow.

Then doubtless many a trifler, on the brink
 Of this world's hazardous and headlong shore,
 Forc'd to a pause, would feel it good to think,
 Told that his setting sun must rise no more.

Ah self-deceiv'd ! Could I prophetic say
 Who next is fated, and who next to fall,
 The rest might then seem privileg'd to play ;
 But, naming *none*, the Voice now speaks to ALL.

Observe the dappled foresters, how light
 They bound and airy o'er the sunny glade—
 One falls—the rest, wide-scatter'd with affright,
 Vanish at once into the darkest shade.

Had we their wisdom, should we, often warn'd,
 Still need repeated warnings, and at last,
 A thousand awful admonitions scorn'd,
 Die self-accus'd of life run all to waste ?

Sad waste ! for which no after-thrift atones.
 The grave admits no cure for guilt or sin ;
 Dew-drops may deck the turf that hides the bones,
 But tears of godly grief ne'er flow within.

Learn then, ye living ! by the mouths be taught
 Of all those sepulchres, instructors true,
 That, soon or late, death also is your lot,
 And the next op'ning grave may yawn for you.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

For the year 1789.

—Placidaque ibi demum morte quievit. Virg.
There calm at length he breath'd his soul away.

- ' O MOST delightful hour by man
- ' Experienc'd here below,
- ' The hour that terminates his span,
- ' His folly, and his wo !
- ' Worlds should not bribe me back to tread
- ' Again life's dreary waste,
- ' To see again my day o'erspread
- ' With all the gloomy past.
- ' My home henceforth is in the skies,
- ' Earth, seas, and sun, adieu !
- ' All Heav'n unfolded to my eyes,
- ' I have no sight for you.'

So spake Aspasio, firm possess'd
Of faith's supporting rod,
Then breath'd his soul into its rest,
The bosom of his God.

He was a man among the few
Sincere on virtue's side ;
And all his strength from Scripture drew,
To hourly use applied.

That rule he priz'd, by that he fear'd,
He hated, hop'd, and lov'd ;
Nor ever frown'd, or sad appear'd,
But when his heart had rov'd.

For he was frail, as thou or I,
And evil felt within :

But, when he felt it, heav'd a sigh,
And loath'd the thought of sin.

Such liv'd Aspasio ; and at last
Call'd up from Earth to Heav'n,
The gulf of death triumphant pass'd,
By gales of blessing driv'n.

His joys be *mine*, each Reader cries,
When my last hour arrives :
They shall be yours, my Verse replies,
Such only be your lives.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

For the year 1790.

Ne commentem recta sperne. Buchanan.
Despise not my good counsel.

HE who sits from day to day,
Where the prison'd lark is hung,
Heedless of his loudest lay,
Hardly knows that he has sung.

Where the watchman in his round
Nightly lifts his voice on high,
None, accustom'd to the sound,
Wakes the sooner for his cry.

So your verse-man I, and clerk,
Yearly in my song proclaim
Death at hand—yourselves his mark—
And the foe's unerring aim.

Duly at my time I come,
Publishing to all aloud—
Soon the grave must be your home,
And your only suit, a shroud.

But the monitory strain,
 Oft repeated in your ears,
 Seems to sound too much in vain,
 Wins no notice, wakes no fears.

Can a truth, by all confess'd
 Of such magnitude and weight,
 Grow, by being oft impress'd,
 Trivial as a parrot's prate?

Pleasure's call attention wins,
 Hear it often as we may;
 New as ever seem our sins,
 Though committed ev'ry day.

Death and Judgment, Heav'n and Hell—
 These alone, so often heard,
 No more move us than the bell,
 When some stranger is interr'd.

O then, ere the turf or tomb
 Cover us from ev'ry eye,
 Spirit of instruction come,
 Make us learn, that we must die.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

For the year 1792.

*Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
 Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
 Subiecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari*
 Virg.

Happy the mortal, who has trac'd effects
 To their first cause, cast fear beneath his feet,
 And Death and roaring Hell's voracious fires!

THANKLESS for favours from on high,
 Man thinks he fades too soon;
 Though 'tis his privilege to die,
 Would he improve the boon.

But he, not wise enough to scan
 His blest concerns aright,
 Would gladly stretch life's little span
 To ages, if he might.

To ages in a world of pain,
 To ages, where he goes
 Gall'd by affliction's heavy chain,
 And hopeless of repose.

Strange fondness of the human heart,
 Enamour'd of its harm !
 Strange world, that costs it so much smart,
 And still has pow'r to charm.

Whence has the world her magic pow'r ?
 Why deem we death a foe ?
 Recoil from weary life's best hour,
 And covet longer wo ?

The cause is Conscience—Conscience oft
 Her tale of guilt renews :
 Her voice is terrible though soft,
 And dread of death ensues.

Then anxious to be longer spar'd
 Man mourns his fleeting breath :
 All evils then seem light, compar'd
 With the approach of Death.

'Tis judgment shakes him ; there's the fear,
 That prompts the wish to stay ;
 He has incurr'd a long arrear,
 And must despair to pay.

Pay!—follow Christ, and all is paid ;
 His death your peace ensures ;
 Think on the grave where *he* was laid,
 And calm descend to *yours*.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

For the year 1793.

De sacris autem hæc sit una sententia, ut conserventur.

Q. de Leg.

But let us all concur in this one sentiment, that things sacred be inviolate.

HE lives, who lives to God alone,
 And all are dead beside ;
 For other source than God is none
 Whence life can be supplied.

To live to God is to requite
 His love as best we may ;
 To make his precepts our delight,
 His promises our stay.

But life, within a narrow ring
 Of giddy joys compris'd,
 Is falsely nam'd, and no such thing,
 But rather death disguis'd.

Can life in them deserve the name,
 Who only live to prove
 For what poor toys they can disclaim
 An endless life above ?

Who, much diseas'd, yet nothing feel ;
 Much menac'd, nothing dread ;
 Have wounds, which only God can heal,
 Yet never ask his aid ?

Who deem his house a useless place,
 Faith, want of common sense ;
 And ardour in the Christian race,
 A hypocrite's pretence ?

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Who trample order ; and the day,
Which God asserts his own,
Dishonour with unhallow'd play
And worship chance alone ?

If scorn of God's commands, impress'd
On word and deed, imply
The better part of man unblest'd
With life that cannot die :

Such want it, and that want, uncur'd
Till man resigns his breath,
Speaks him a criminal, assur'd
Of everlasting death.

Sad period to a pleasant course !
Yet so will God repay
Sabbaths profan'd without remorse,
And mercy cast away.

INSCRIPTION

FOR THE TOMB OF MR HAMILTON.

PAUSE here, and think ; a monitory rhyme
Demands one moment of thy fleeting time.

Consult life's silent clock, thy bounding vein ;
Seems it to say—' Health here has long to reign ?'
Hast thou the vigour of thy youth ? an eye
That beams delight ? a heart untaught to sigh ?
Yet fear. Youth, oft-times healthful and at ease,
Anticipates a day it never sees ;
And many a tomb, like *Hamilton's*, aloud
Exclaims, ' Prepare thee for an early shroud.'

EPITAPH ON A HARE.

HERE lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,
Nor swifter greyhound follow,
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
Nor ear heard huntsman's hallo'.

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,
Who, nurs'd with tender care,
And to domestic bounds confin'd,
Was still a wild Jack-hare.

Though duly from my hand he took
His pittance ev'ry night,
He did it with a jealous look,
And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,
And milk, and oats, and straw ;
Thistles, or lettuces instead,
With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regal'd,
On pippins' russet peel,
And, when his juicy salads fail'd,
Slic'd carrot pleas'd him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,
Whereon he lov'd to bound,
To skip and gambol like a fawn,
And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at ev'ning hours,
For then he lost his fear,
But most before approaching show'rs,
Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round-rolling moons
He thus saw steal away,
Dozing out all his idle noons,
And ev'ry night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,
 For he would oft beguile
 My heart of thoughts, that made it ache,
 And force me to a smile.

But now beneath his walnut shade
 He finds his long last home,
 And waits, in snug concealment laid,
 Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more aged, feels the shocks,
 From which no care can save,
 And, partner once of Tiney's box,
 Must soon partake his grave.



EPITAPHIUM ALTERUM.

Hic etiam jacet,
 Qui totum novennium vixit,
 Puss.

Siste paulisper,
 Qui præteriturus es,
 Et tecum sic reputa—
 Hunc neque canis venaticus,
 Nec plumbum missile,
 Nec laqueus,
 Nec imbres nimii,
 Confecêre !

Tamen mortuus est—
 Et moriar ego.

The following Account of the Treatment of his Hares was inserted by Mr Cowper in the Gentleman's Magazine, whence it is transcribed.

IN the year 1774, being much indisposed both in mind and body, incapable of diverting myself either with company or books, and yet in a condition that made some diversion necessary, I was glad of any thing that would engage my attention without fatiguing it. The children of a neighbour of mine had a leveret given them for a plaything; it was at that time about three months old. Understanding better how to tease the poor creature than to feed it, and soon becoming weary of their charge, they readily consented that their father, who saw it pining and growing leaner every day, should offer it to my acceptance. I was willing enough to take the prisoner under my protection, perceiving that, in the management of such an animal, and in the attempt to tame it, I should find just that sort of employment which my case required. It was soon known among the neighbours that I was pleased with the present; and the consequence was, that in a short time I had as many leverets offered to me as would have stocked a paddock. I undertook the care of three, which it is necessary that I should here distinguish by the names I gave them—Puss, Tiney, and Bess. Notwithstanding the two feminine appellatives, I must inform you that they were all males. Immediately commencing carpenter, I built them houses to sleep in; each had a separate apartment, so contrived, that their ordure would pass through the bottom of it; an earthen pan placed under each received whatsoever fell, which being duly emptied and washed, they were thus kept perfectly sweet and clean. In the day-time they had the range of a hall, and at night retired each to his own bed, never intruding into that of another.

Puss grew presently familiar, would leap into my lap, raise himself upon his hinder feet, and bite the hair from my temples. He would suffer me to take him up, and to carry him about in my arms, and has more than once fallen fast asleep upon my knee. He was ill three days, during which time I nursed him, kept him apart from his fellows, that they might not molest him (for, like many other wild animals, they persecute one of their own species that is sick), and by constant care, and trying him with a variety of herbs, restored him to perfect health. No creature could be more grateful than my patient after his recovery; a sentiment which he most significantly expressed by licking my hand, first the back of it, then the palm, then every finger separately, then between all the fingers, as if anxious to leave no part of it unsaluted; a ceremony which he never performed but once again upon a similar occasion. Finding him extremely tractable, I made it my custom to carry him always after breakfast into the garden, where he hid himself generally under the leaves of a cucumber vine, sleeping or chewing the cud till evening; in the leaves also of that vine he found a favourite repast. I had not long habituated him to this taste of liberty, before he began to be impatient for the return of the time when he might enjoy it. He would invite me to the garden by drumming upon my knee, and by a look of such expression, as it was not possible to misinterpret. If this rhetoric did not immediately succeed, he would take the skirt of my coat between his teeth and pull at it with all his force. Thus Puss might be said to be perfectly tamed, the shyness of his nature was done away, and on the whole it was visible by many symptoms, which I have not room to enumerate, that he was happier in human society, than when shut up with his natural companions.

Not so Tiney: upon him the kindest treatment had not the least effect. He too was sick, and in

his sickness had an equal share of my attention ; but if, after his recovery, I took the liberty to stroke him, he would grunt, strike with his fore feet, spring forward, and bite. He was however very entertaining in his way ; even his surliness was matter of mirth ; and in his play he preserved such an air of gravity, and performed his feats with such a solemnity of manner, that in him too I had an agreeable companion.

Bess, who died soon after he was full grown, and whose death was occasioned by his being turned into his box, which had been washed, while it was yet damp, was a hare of great humour and drollery. Fuss was tamed by gentle usage ; Tiney was not to be tamed at all ; and Bess had a courage and confidence that made him tame from the beginning. I always admitted them into the parlour after supper, when, the carpet affording their feet a firm hold, they would frisk, and bound, and play a thousand gambols, in which Bess, being remarkably strong and fearless, was always superior to the rest, and proved himself the Vestris of the party. One evening the cat, being in the room, had the hardiness to pat Bess upon the cheek, an indignity which he resented by drumming upon her back with such violence, that the cat was happy to escape from under his paws, and hide herself.

I describe these animals as having each a character of his own. Such they were in fact, and their countenances were so expressive of that character, that, when I looked only on the face of either, I immediately knew which it was. It is said that a shepherd, however numerous his flock, soon becomes so familiar with their features, that he can, by that indication only, distinguish each from all the rest ; and yet, to a common observer, the difference is hardly perceptible. I doubt not that the same discrimination in the cast of countenances would be discoverable in hares, and am persuaded that among a thousand of them, no two could be found exactly

similar : a circumstance little suspected by those who have not had opportunity to observe it. These creatures have a singular sagacity in discovering the minutest alteration that is made in the place to which they are accustomed, and instantly apply their nose to the examination of a new object. A small hole being burnt in the carpet, it was mended with a patch, and that patch in a moment underwent the strictest scrutiny. They seem too to be very much directed by the smell in the choice of their favourites : to some persons, though they saw them daily, they could never be reconciled, and would even scream when they attempted to touch them ; but a miller coming in engaged their affections at once ; his powdered coat had charms that were irresistible. It is no wonder that my intimate acquaintance with these specimens of the kind has taught me to hold the sportsman's amusement in abhorrence ; he little knows what amiable creatures he persecutes, of what gratitude they are capable, how cheerful they are in their spirits, what enjoyment they have of life, and that, impressed as they seem with a peculiar dread of man, it is only because man gives them peculiar cause for it.

That I may not be tedious, I will just give a short summary of those articles of diet that suit them best.

I take it to be a general opinion that they graze, but it is an erroneous one, at least grass is not their staple ; they seem rather to use it medicinally, soon quitting it for leaves of almost any kind. Sow-thistle, dandelion, and lettuce, are their favourite vegetables, especially the last. I discovered by accident, that fine white sand is in great estimation with them ; I suppose as a digestive. It happened that I was cleaning a bird-cage while the hares were with me ; I placed a pot filled with such sand upon the floor, which being at once directed to by a strong instinct, they devoured voraciously ; since that time I have generally taken care to see them well supplied with it. They account green corn a delicacy,

both blade and stalk, but the ear they seldom eat ; straw of any kind, especially wheat-straw, is another of their dainties ; they will feed greedily upon oats, but if furnished with clean straw never want them ; it serves them also for a bed, and, if shaken up daily, will be kept sweet and dry for a considerable time. They do not indeed require aromatic herbs, but will eat a small quantity of them with great relish, and are particularly fond of the plant called musk ; they seem to resemble sheep in this, that, if their pasture be too succulent, they are very subject to the rot : to prevent which, I always made bread their principal nourishment, and, filling a pan with it cut into small squares, placed it every evening in their chambers, for they feed only at evening and in the night : during the winter, when vegetables were not to be got, I mingled this mess of bread with shreds of carrot, adding to it the rind of apples cut extremely thin ; for, though they are fond of the paring, the apple itself disgusts them. These however not being a sufficient substitute for the juice of summer herbs, they must at this time be supplied with water ; but so placed, that they cannot overset it into their beds. I must not omit, that occasionally they are much pleased with twigs of hawthorn, and of the common brier, eating even the very wood when it is of considerable thickness.

Bess, I have said, died young ; Tiney lived to be nine years old, and died at last, I have reason to think, of some hurt in his loins by a fall ; Puss is still living, and has just completed his tenth year, discovering no signs of decay, nor even of age, except that he is grown more discreet and less frolicsome than he was. I cannot conclude without observing, that I have lately introduced a dog to his acquaintance, a spaniel that had never seen a hare to a hare that had never seen a spaniel. I did it with great caution, but there was no real need of it. Puss discovered no token of fear, nor Marquis the least symptom of hostility. There is therefore, it

should seem, no natural antipathy between dog and hare, but the pursuit of the one occasions the flight of the other, and the dog pursues because he is trained to it; they eat bread at the same time out of the same hand, and are in all respects sociable and friendly.

I should not do complete justice to my subject, did I not add, that they have no ill scent belonging to them, that they are indefatigably nice in keeping themselves clean, for which purpose nature has furnished them with a brush under each foot; and that they are never infested by any vermin.

May 28, 1784.

Memorandum found among Mr Cowper's papers.

Tuesday, March 9, 1786.

This day died poor Puss, aged eleven years eleven months. He died between twelve and one at noon, of mere old age, and apparently without pain.

THE END.

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